
SURFING WORLD
1962 ONWARDS
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SO PERFECT
WHY YOUR NEXT SURF TRIP WILL BE TO...
THE MALDIVES
MP UNTOLD
Myths That Became Legends
MICK BOUNCES BACK
Shark Bashing Legend
Takes On Huge Shippies
IT'S NOT A SHARK THING,
IT'S A PEOPLE THING
Jock Serong Taps Into The Psyche
Of Surfers On The NSW North Coast
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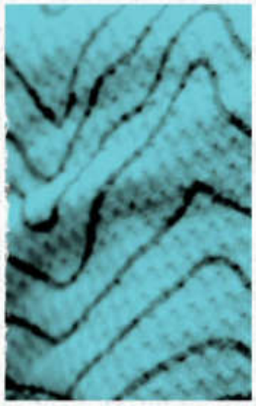

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OZZIE WRIGHT WEARS STRIPEY SLINGERS

PHOTOS BY TOM CAREY

What Do Your Surfing Dreams Look Like?

MINE LOOK LIKE THIS...

I'm lying in a hammock watching palm fronds tickling a perfect blue sky as a light offshore breeze tempers the heat of a typically tropical afternoon. Suddenly Cornelius the suit-wearing wombat runs over holding his virtual reality helmet and says "Dude, the other side of the island is pumping, look at this immersive text Rasta just sent me via mental telepathy." I put on the helmet and sure enough, there's Rasta waxing up a turtle in front of the glassiest three foot barrels you've ever seen. I press the transportation button and Cornelius and I materialise alongside Rasta already waxing up turtles of our own. "Great day for a slide," says Rasta, only he's not Rasta anymore, he's Danny DeVito and he's wearing yellow undies and drinking something orange from a glass with a little green umbrella sticking out the top of it. He walks off leaving Cornelius and I to paddle out on our turtles, which are now 5'8" quads shaped by Shaun Cansdell.

The water is dead still, an oily and translucent blue and the rights tapering along the reef are head high and barreling. As we paddle closer to the take off zone we see a beautiful naked woman with brown skin and wild golden hair appear from behind the foam ball and throw down a hammer layback that even John John Florence would be proud of. Then on the next wave, John John Florence launches a giant nude alley oop landing on a cushion of pink cloud that's already being ridden by a monkey in a red suit with a gold headband and awesome sideburns.

Cornelius and I finally reach the take off zone as a set appears. Wayne Lynch takes the first one. Midget Farrelly is on the second. I swing for the third. It's a mellow roll in allowing plenty of time to figure out the meaning of life as I perform a generously drawn out bottom turn. Rinsing off some speed I tuck in and set line and as the curl throws over me I start to hum the theme song to Dr Who. The barrel twists and turns, goes upside down and around corners. A kaliedescope of colours and faces and moments from my childhood flash before my eyes. The water gives way to space as I hit the speed of light. Matter dissolves. Time ceases to exist. I'm floating in a void, stationary and weightless. Enlightened. I close my eyes. I think I'm smiling but my physical presence is no more…

…and then I open my eyes. I see palm fronds tickling a clear blue sky. I'm lying in a hammock and a breeze is cooling the hot tropical air. It was all a dream, but a dream that's got me psyched to surf. I pick up my virtual reality helmet and send a couple of telepathic messages to Cornelius and Danny DeVito. A few seconds later they materialise and we're out there. **– Vaughan Blakey**



Duncan McNicol dreams of circles inside spirals and wheels within wheels. (Swilly)



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IT'S NOT ABOUT SHARKS

Jock Serong visits the NSW Far North Coast to feel out the current mood of local surfers following an unprecendednted number of shark encounters. Not mentioned in the story: he stayed at my wooza's place!

P.051

WAKE WALKERS

The Maldives is the ultimate playground for all surfers who prefer their ocean clean, their crowds sparse, their waves friendly and their dreams a reality. As Dave Rasta and friends discovered recently.

P.069

CHILLIN' WITH SABRE

What's it like to be a 10-year-old girl in 2015? It's pretty epic if you ask surf/skate prodigy Sabre Norris, especially when there's an all-you-can-eat buffet around. Sean Doherty reports...

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MP UNTOLD

Five stories from Sean Doherty's new book in which friends and aquaintances of the mysterious Michael Peterson shed some light on his life and character through experiences all their own.

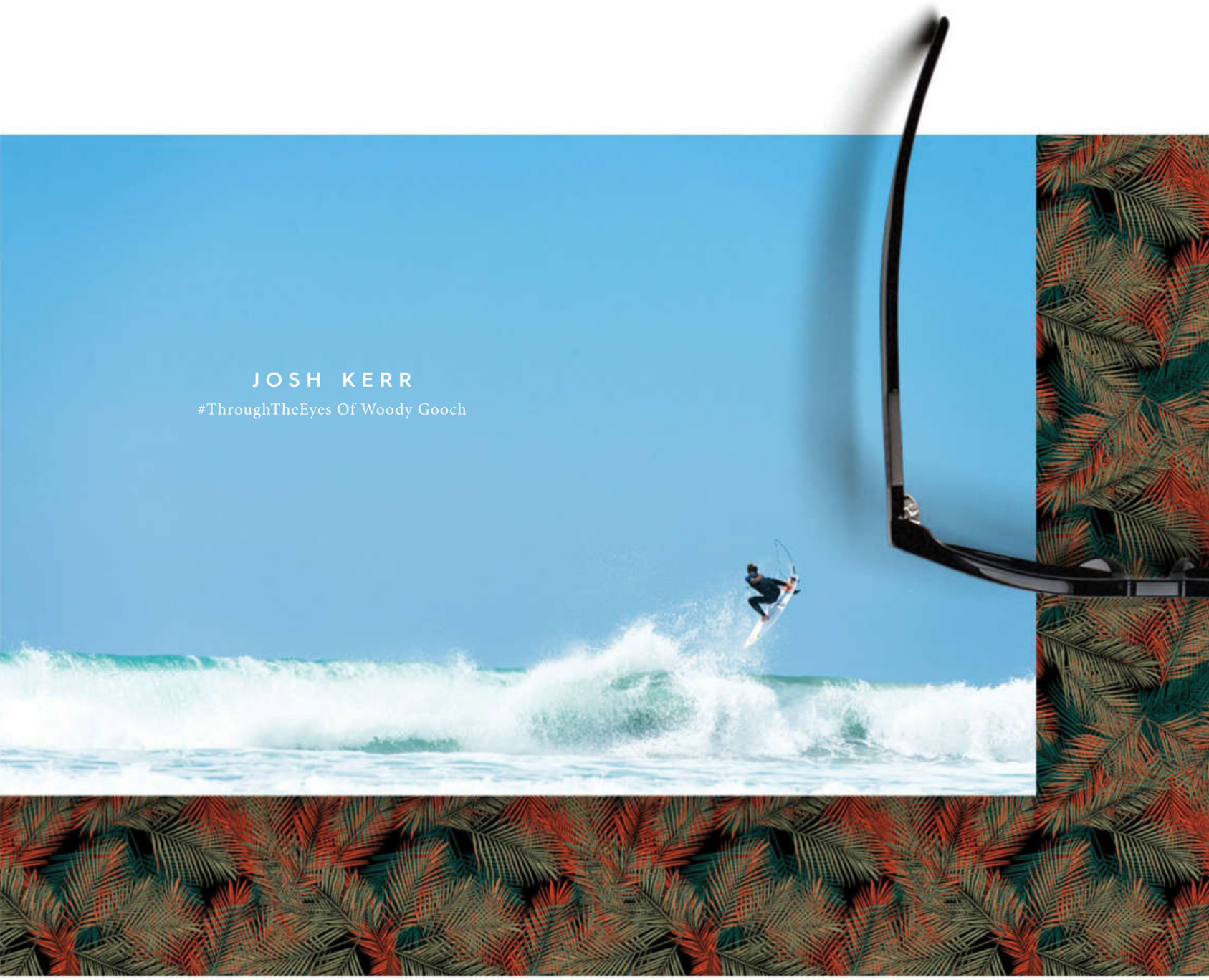
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RY & KAI

Ryan Callinan and Kai Hing are two of Australia's most progressive young talents. So what's their take on the future of high performance and the relevance of King Kelly?

The Octopus

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THE STAND OUT SESSIONS



Captured by: Alex Frings

Main Beach, Byron Bay - Winter of 2014. "I received a swell alert from Coastalwatch Plus. The conditions I saved for this swell alert were for the Christmas Swell of 2011. I hadn't received this alert for about 4 years! My mate Zac was a couple of years older and came for the pickup nice and early. It was a school day, I brought all of my gear so I could head there after. We rocked up and couldn't have hoped for better. 4-5ft peaks, no one out (yet), offshore and kegging. So far, this was the best sessions I've had at this break and I won't forget it anytime soon. And lets just say I missed the school bus."

JHAMIL COOREY / SWELL ALERTS

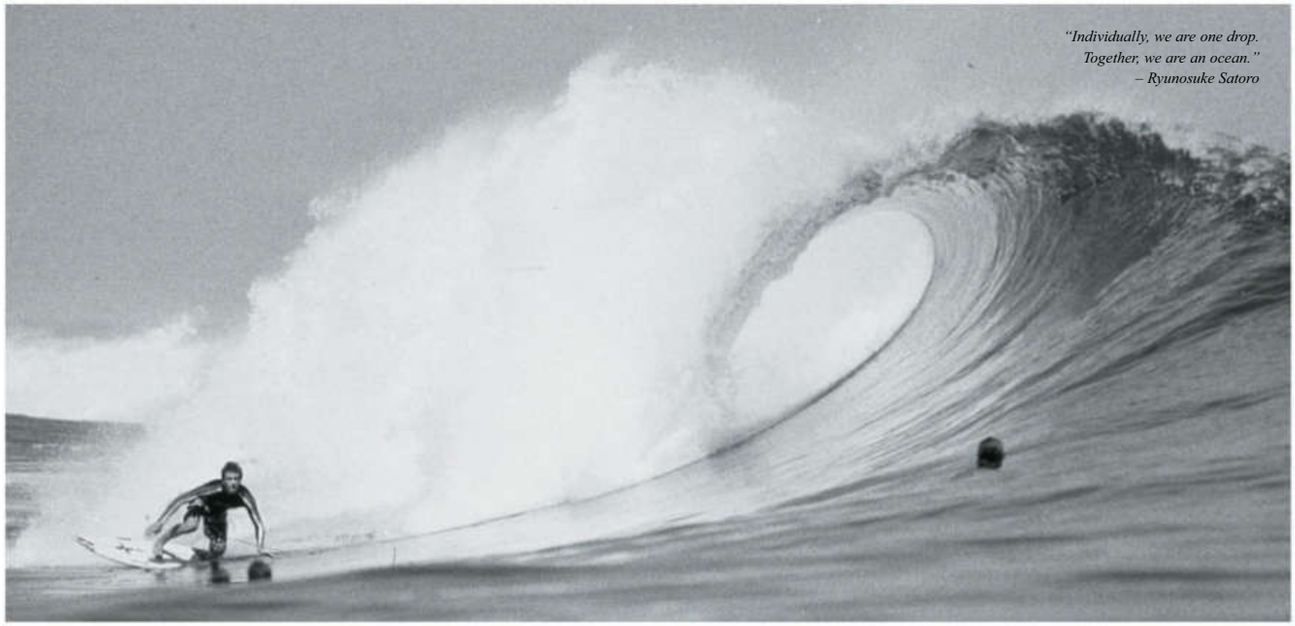
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THE OCTOPUS

A GOOD DEAL OF LOTS, AND NOT MUCH IN PARTICULAR, JUST FOR THE SAKE OF IT ○ SPRING ○ VOL.18 ○ ISSUE 367 ○ ABALONE NOODLE



"Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean."
– Ryunosuke Satoro

THE BEST SURFING I HAVE EVER SEEN, BY ACE BUCHAN

Shaun Cansdell, 30 Cent Ice Creams at Maccas, 2001

I first saw some footage of Cans when I was about 14. I was doing some coaching with Martin Dunn who really had his finger on the pulse in terms of new talent. I quizzed him on who he thought was exciting in my age group. He showed me this footage of Shaun surfing at home in Mullaway and I just freaked out on his maturity, timing and ability to read a wave.



Not too long after that we both signed with Billabong and did a bunch of memorable trips together. We started meeting in State, Australian and World Junior Finals and had a great rivalry. It was a cool trade off because Shaun was definitely the guy that pushed me the most to improve as a surfer and I think I pushed him to improve as a competitor.

In 2001, the year after I finished school, we travelled together and mid way through the year did a boat trip to the Mentawais. Once the waves got good Shaun really lifted his game. Half way through the trip we anchored up at Macaronis.

SURFING WORLD FACTS

1. In 1990 a group of World Tour pros signed a letter to *Surfer Magazine* complaining about the amount of media coverage Christian Fletcher was getting with his new fandangled aerial surfing. Fletcher responded by calling the letter "stupid". **2.** In a cover story written for the Australian edition of *Life Magazine* in 1967, Californian hellman Fred Van Dyke noted many big-wave surfers were "latent homosexuals." The nuances of his argument were lost, and he was soon being greeted along the North Shore with shouts of "queer-boy!" **3.** Kaui Hart Hemmings, the daughter of 1968 World Champion and World Tour creator Fred Hemmings, had her critically acclaimed first novel turned into a film starring George Clooney. It was called *The Descendants*. **4.** Only six surfers were invited to the first Pipeline Masters in 1971. Hawaiian pro surfer Jeff Hakman took the $500 first-place while Pipeline prodigy Gerry Lopez was a no-show – allegedly because third-place finisher Corky Carroll told Lopez the event had been postponed.

Image: Shaun Cansdell (Bosko). **Octopus Masthead**: Nick Potts.


REEF



WHEN YOU WATCH SHAUN SURF AND HE'S REALLY "ON" IT'S KIND OF LIKE WATCHING GREAT LIVE MUSIC. THERE'S A LOT OF FEELING IN IT AND I LOVE THAT.

Shaun had been pestering Matty Cruden, the captain of the Mangalui and one of the most respected Sea Dogs up there, to go to Macca's for days and when we finally pulled in there you could just see him getting into this almost savant like state. He was super particular about his boards, would pour over them for hours asking you if you saw the little nuances here and there that he did or didn't like. He did things like sanding the deck himself to try and make his boards lighter. He had this little cut down swallowtail Dahlberg, maybe a 5'10, that he'd been saving for Macca's on this trip and once he got on that thing... Wow!

His surfing was electric with incredible energy and panache. Everything was spontaneous. He was doing these cheeky little fades but not to get barrelled it was to give himself a different angle of approach at the lip – that kind of became a trademark of his in rippable lefts. And he would just blast those things to pieces. Blow tails, drop wallets and carving threes... he had the best bag of tricks anyway but all put together with this impeccable flow and an innate ability to react to what the wave was doing, it was next level. Nothing was premeditated.

Macca's is such a great canvas because it doesn't change too much from wave to wave. But it does lure you into dropping straight into the barrel and you would fly out of that with so much speed that you'd be out on the face and cutting back in no time. Cans had a different approach. He was catching so many waves getting in a crazy rhythm, not waiting for the bigger sets but looking for the mid size rippable ones, and just unleashing his full repertoire. Big frontside wraps into square up fin drifts and followed up with an air 360 or one of his signature laybacks. From behind it looked unbelievable.

I'd be lying if I said I wasn't a little intimidated but at the same time it really excited me because Cans showed me that our generation was coming of age. I knew at the time that the surfing he was doing there was truly world class.

We surfed our brains out for three days, drank Bintangs at night and gave each other mowhawk haircuts as you do on a boat trip. Cans is known to have a big appetite and this trip was no exception. He'd already been getting into the Mangalui's secret stash of cookies and Beng-Bengs between surfs to keep himself going and the Cook Wally was starting to get a little pissed. One day he put a dozen ice-creams in the freezer for dinner and told everyone not to eat them until that night. Sure enough Shaun started hitting the stash between surfs and come dinnertime half the ice-creams were gone. Wally hit the roof and wanted a piece of Cans. Things got a little heated and we had to calm them both down. I learnt to never get in the way of Shaun and his ice-creams or a good lefthander.

Even though he's not on tour Shaun still has a huge amount of respect from the top surfers in the world for his natural ability. I'm not sure the general surf public really ever got to appreciate just how talented he is because he only spent a couple of years on tour. Our first year he made everyone look silly at four foot Cloudbreak. Just drawing these crazy, radical lines at top speed. To me that performance really vindicated his talent and what a lot of his peers had known for a while.

If he could have bottled that feeling he had when he got excited over reeling lefthanders and put that energy into the other parts of his act I think he could have challenged for a World Title.

When you watch Shaun surf and he's really "on" it's kind of like watching great live music. There's a lot of feeling in it and I love that. On tour a lot of surfing can be pretty devoid of emotion so Shaun really inspired me to let out that inner love of what we do.

Cansdell – a natural talent with a line all his own. Kali and Johnny New Boots would agree. (Bosko)


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LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

The best thing to do when you see a shark in the line-up is...



Tom Carroll

X2 World Champion

Don't freak. Observe the creature's movements and your own response. Allow space. Act accordingly.



Shane Dorian

Big wave lunatic, hunter

Go underwater and swim straight at it while screaming like a crazy person.



Rob Machado

Pipe Master, Drifter

Hope that you're in the water with Mick Fanning.



Wayne Lynch

Evolutionary

Don't panic, don't splash, be really strong. If you feel like you need to go in, go in very calmly. Always keep an eye on the shark.



Simon Anderson

Pipe Master, Photographer

Tell those around you and then go in... unless you feel comfortable staying out.



Sally Fitzgibbons

X2 Bells Winner,
Wide World of Sports Host

Scream "Ahhhhhhhh Shaaaaaaaaarrrk! Help!"



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COWBOY FACT
Cowboy once spent $400 on a stainless steel fruit bowl but sadly couldn't afford fruit for it.

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on the boil...



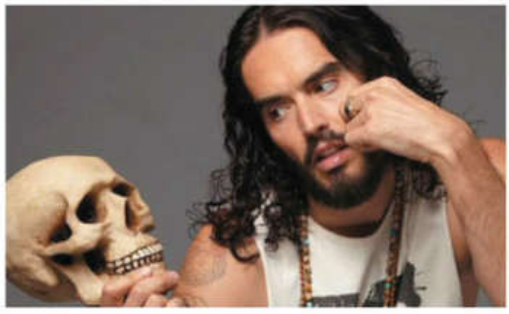
Exhibition - David Bowie Is

This exhibition encompassing the life's work of David Bowie is – for want of a more culturally relevent description – totally wicked transgender spaceman awesome. David Bowie Is... as it turns out, everywhere. He's at your house. He's behind your curtains. He's in your bath. He's brushing your hair. As one of the most powerful artists of the past five decades his influence reaches from what you wear through to what your favourite band wants to sound like. And this exhibit showcases it all, all his most iconic costumes, rarely seen interviews, lyric sheets, photographs, arthouse mime movies, hand drawn posters of his earliest gigs, even a tissue smeared with red lippy from his days as Ziggy Stardust. Every which way you turn your senses are bombarded with multi-media explosions of genius individuality. Be you a writer, filmmaker, actor, dancer, poet, musician, fisherman, shaper, bread baker, accountant, dole bludger, 360 Flyer or plain old fashioned surfboard rider, there is life changing inspiration to be found within the walls of Bowie's exceptional body of work. It runs at Melbourne's ACMI until November 1. Book your ticket, stay at The Olsen hotel but don't ask who did the paintings on the walls.



Festival - This That Festival

Brand new festivals are the greatest thing since really old festivals. Middle-aged festivals are neither here nor there as they're probably getting an earing and buying a Harley in the midst of some kind of personal crisis. This That Festival is young and happening, October 31 on the Newcastle Foreshore to be specific and will feature Sydney outfit Rüfüs, Sticky Fingers and Atlas Bound. Pretend you're young and happening by attending. Tickets available from thisthat.com.au



Comedy - Just for Laughs

Lead by the eloquent hilarity of Russell Brand (aka Mr Katy Perry's ex), Just for Laughs comedy fest is on again. Held at the Opera House and also featuring the all-star cast of Danny Bhoy, John Bishop and Celia Pacquola, it's sure to make you wee your pants. Not a full bladder release that'll leave a wet patch on your chair, but a tiny little bit of wee that'll feel gross in your undies for a minute or two. Just for Laughs is held October 19th – 25th.



Page One – Jordy Lawler by Swilly

Every year English born photographer Simon Williams calls up SW and says, "Boys, surftrip to the Maldives/Mentawais. Got Ash Grunwald, the Mars Volta, Lars from Metallica and Jack Johnson. Rasta's coming to play the clarinet, there'll be two German Playboy bunnies and Curren wants in. It's yours if you want it." Inevitabley Ash and the Mars Volta go on tour, Lars goes into rehab, Jack is busy recording a new album and Curren has disappeared off the face of the Earth. The trip becomes Rasta hanging out with Playboy bunnies, which is cool in a way, but different from the original pitch. This year Swilly ditched the musos and hooked Rasta up with Chippa, Ozzie, Asher, Dunc McNicol and Jordy Lawler (who's ripping the skin off this wave face on page one). The fun begins on page 51.



Touring - Tame Impala

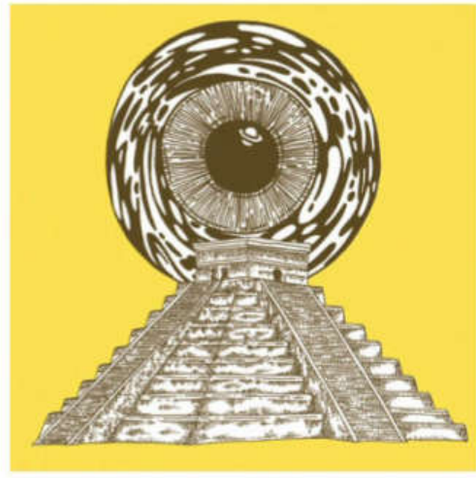
Perth boys Tame Impala, with their awkward stage demeanour and cosmic vibrations and loads of money are touring throughout November and they totally rip live and should be watched with your eyeballs. Their latest album Currents is golden afternoon sunshine broken hearted nostalgia and if you grew up in a paddock in Kalgoorli then that's a strange place to grow up. Check the dates and then move your body in the direction of the gig.



New Record - White Bleaches

Girls always pretend they're going to watch White Bleaches in dingy bars in Melbourne because they like the music but they're really going to see Tyler Slaven, the Torquay shred dude known to have the most beautiful hair in the world. His silken locks aren't the only thing he's got going on though, the Bleaches are actually rad and people do go and see them for other reasons, like their music for example. They have a new EP on the horizon, with the lead single 'New Age' available October 9 on Soundcloud for your eardrums.







Artist - Nick Potts

Nick Potts is fully shredding the Black Sabbath with psychedelic illustration, painting and prints that remind us why 70s rock poster art totally kicked ass. Based in Sydney Nick often delves into the fantasy realms of consciousness. His works are heavily influenced by mysticism, folklore, space, the occult, and heavy metal. He offers a prism through which we can view the manifestation of ideas including where we've come from, where we are and where we are going – if we were all on powerful hallucinogens. **nicholaswpotts.com** and his insta **@nickpotts**



JACK ENTWISTLE

FCS II LB

TOOL-LESS LONGBOARD FINS



FCS II **PIVOT**

Pivot in the pocket, lock the rail on the wave face and run to the nose.



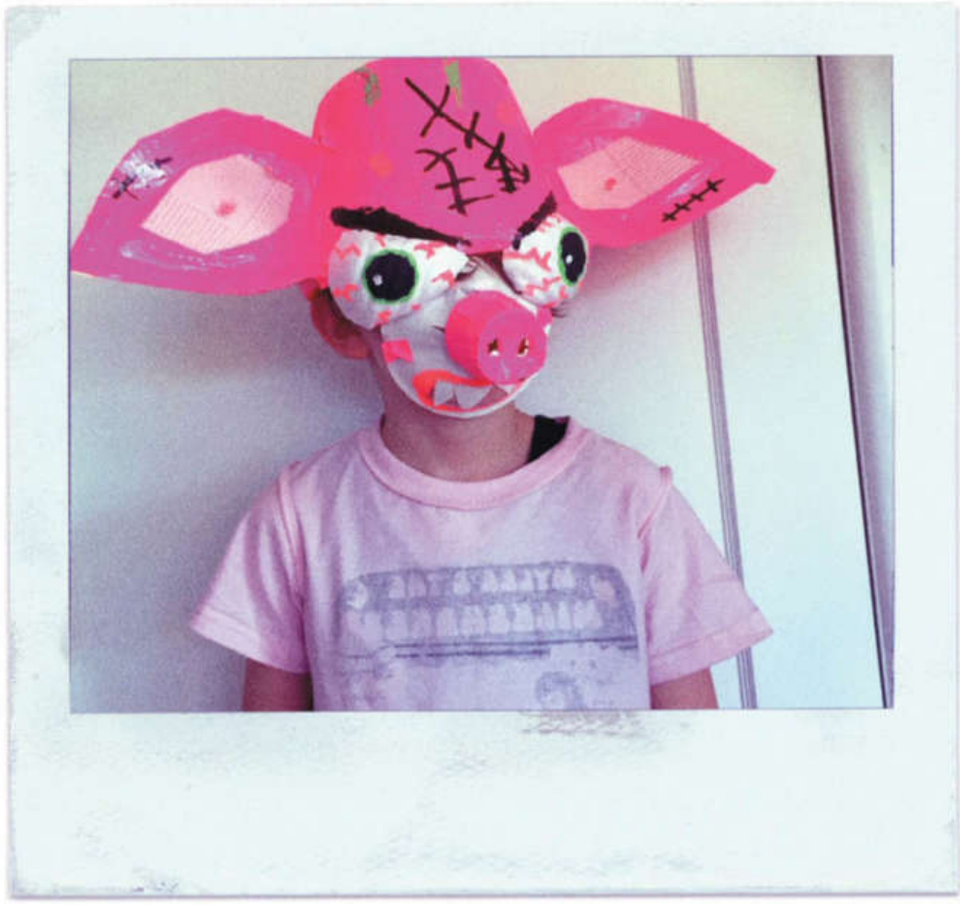
FCS II **CONNECT**

Seamlessly connect turns and move up and down the board.



FCS II **FLOW**

Drive hard off the bottom and perform controlled flowing turns.



MAKING STUFF WITH OZZIE WRONG

This Month: HOW TO MAKE A PINK ZOMBIE PIG MASK

Halloween is just around the corner and thanks to Tony Abbott making a deal with the US government men to get our kids addicted like little junkies to processed sugar, Australian's are now embracing this once despised custom like never before. While I'm opposed to almost everything in the entire world, I have to admit I don't mind drawing, sculpting and writing songs about dead shit, especially dead shit that comes back to life. So I figured "Hey, Rocky needs a mask for his year two Halloween school parade and I have a column due on making stuff... let's kill (or bring to life if you will) two pigs with one stone and make a pink zombie pig mask." It was logical so that's what I did.



Everyone knows the greatest zombie in human history is Dr. Frankenstein's monster followed closely by Michael Jackson (who died shortly after recording *Thriller* but was reanimated using electrified white voodoo paste that was smeared all over his face and body – sadly the paste didn't work on his music post *Thriller*). By and large though, human zombies suck compared to animal zombies which are far creepier and way more likely to be brought back to life through black magic rather than some stupid virus, which is the human zombie reanimation *method du jour*. Rocky and I chose a pig as our zombie animal for two reasons. 1. We had heaps of pink gaffer tape 2. There is no second reason.

Step 1. The first thing you need is a tub of yoghurt big enough to fit on your child's head. IMPORTANT: Empty the yoghurt *before* you put the bucket on your child's head, unless he has nits, in which case shave his head, set fire to everything you own and move into a vacumn sealed white box suspended 80 meters above the ground by a giant crane.

Step 2. As well as your yoghurt tub you'll also need three disposable dust masks (which you can get from anyone at the airport who's still afraid of bird flu), a $3000 Versace knitted sweater (which you can get from Nathan Webster's walk-in wardrobe), an elastic band (which you can get from the pile of *Failure to Vote for Government Men* fines you have on your kitchen table), a sketch book cover (which you steal from any uni student who's fallen asleep on public transport), an espresso in a takeaway cup (call Robbie Warden on 0407 924 788 and get him to grab you one from Zumbo in Newport), some super crazy fluro pink gaffer tape (which you can get from the Hell Fire Club on Regent Street) and some Posca pens which you can get from the good people at Mitsubishi.

Step 3. Take your pink gaffer tape and stick your child to the wall so they don't move. Cut some plastic ears out of the sketchbook cover and line them with fabric from the Versace sweater. Stick the ears to the bucket with more gaffer tape then drink some espresso so that you get super wired and start to feel anxious for no reason. Take two of your dust masks and draw giant bloodshot eyes on them with the Poscas while cutting sharp teeth into the third. Finally cover the espresso cup in gaffer tape, punch two holes in the end, attach the elastic band and slide over your child's head. Once in position pull the cup/nose as far from your child's face as the elastic band will allow and then release. The ensuing slap/screeching will give your pink zombie pig a wailing intensity necessary to complete the outfit.

Like most pink zombie pig bats, Ozzie also likes to hibernate in caves during the day. (Swilly)



Recommended



Camera – 360fly

Imagine if you had eyes not just in the front of your head but also in the back of your head. Imagine if you also had eyes in your ears and on top of your head and covering all the rest of your skull for that matter too. Now imagine all those eyes were looking through video cameras and filming every which way whenever you took off on a wave. Welcome to the world of 360fly, a new camera that will change the way we view what we do forever. This camera is smaller than a tennis ball, clocks vision in Hi-Res (big enough to print a billboard of your nose hairs on Sunset Strip pin sharp) and literally sees everything within a 360 degree radius. Which is everything. Stick one of these bad boys on your board you'll know how deep you get in the barrel, what your tube face looks like, how many people were on the beach watching, even the colour the eagle that flew overhead while you were getting shacked – all at the same time. When you get in you can download the footage into your phone and scroll around or you can stick your phone in a set of goggles and experience the ride again through actual virtual reality. It's remarkable and it's totally FOR REAL! And get this… you can send the footage from your phone direct to your socials, meaning that your grandma in Barbados can whack on the goggles and actually ride your barrel as if she was fully getting piped with you. Sure beats dropping your rolls of Kodak down the Chemist.



Welcome To Country – iPhone App

The Welcome To Country iPhone App is here to help. Using the GPS function of your phone it'll give you a traditional Welcome To Country video introduction to the traditional land you're standing on, and a short education on its first people and language. It's an ongoing and extensive project, as there are over 500 Indigenous tribes and language groups in Australia.



Light Weight – The Ocean Party

How this tops as young Aussie band hasn't self-imploded is a mystery. Ocean Party has six band members and each one of them is a contributing singer-songwriter. Not only have they not ripped apart into a hexagon of creative differences, they have released five albums in three years, all with a consistent, coherent, and bloody nice sound. Light Weight continues their form of quality modern couch-surfy songwriting, but adds a touch of 80s pop too. As if in some parallel universe Tears For Fears was actually a band of six dudes living in 2015 Melbourne. They'll be touring all over Australia in October/November.



Book – Sex Drugs And Cocoa Puffs

There is this incredible article floating around the Internet where the writer decides to see Nickelback and Creed in the same night to gain an understanding of why these bands are the world's most hated, while still remaining immensely popular. It's as hilarious as it sounds. The guy who wrote it is named Chuck Klosterman and Sex, Drugs and Cocoa Puffs is his best and most famous work. Coined "a low culture manifesto", it's a series of essays on pop culture spanning everything from the significance of Guns 'n' Roses tribute bands, to how video games like The Sims illustrate some of the greatest and most profound questions of our own free will. What matters most is that this book is funny and smart.



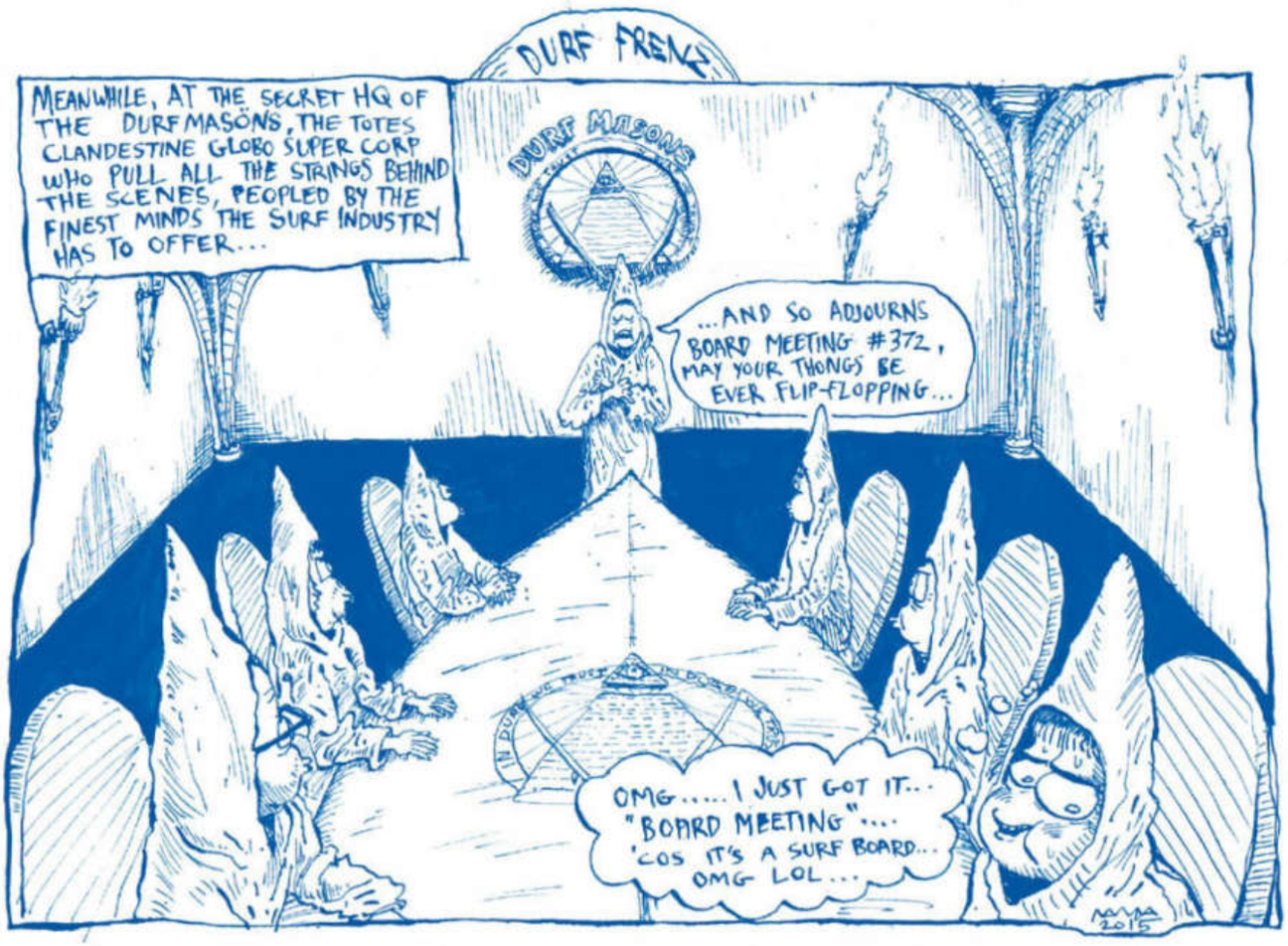
La Luz – Weirdo Shrine

Oh look, it's our new favourite band, La Luz. Hi La Luz. How you doing? It's really nice to meet you and your incredible mix of dark pop with doo-woppy vocals and Dick Dale surf guitars. Heard you recorded this album, which is really great btw, in a surf shop in California. Ty Segall produced it too? What's he like? Bet he's real cool. Hey, do you mind if we develop a deep crush on all four of you? The sort of crush that has us playing your tunes on repeat and daydreaming about appearing in an in-joke of the liner notes of your next album? You do mind? Okay. Anyway, can't wait for you to be all famous and stuff so I can say we had something before everyone else. Love you.

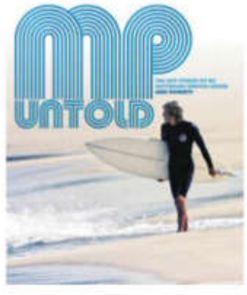


Just kids – Patty Smith

Patti Smith's kind-of auto-biography – "kind-of" because it all essentially takes place from 1967-1974 – came out five years ago now. It's the story of the seminal punk and poet's coming of age in New York as a creative young adult. It's about love and art and growing up and it is an absolutely incredible piece of writing. If you haven't already, you've got to read this thing. Last month it was announced that it will be turned into a TV series, while her sequel to the memoir comes out later this year. Isn't it strange that five years on the book is so revered that it's doing this peculiar thing, like a snake eating its tail, Patti Smith's own writing about her life and her work might be better than the music and poetry it's about?



DURF FRENZ BY NANDA ORMOND FAMOUSANDCOOL.COM



MP Untold – Sean Doherty

We might be biased, but Sean Doherty is the best writer of surfing's current era. His stories that followed the deaths of MP and Andy Irons, – as well as his reporting on the historic Kelly Slater 10th World Title – are the high-water marks of writing for this magazine in the last decade. But it's his Michael Peterson biography that is considered his finest work. Now, with *MP Untold*, Doherty gives us the untold stories, the ones that came out from behind surf club schooner glasses when the original book was published, and the ones that came out from behind mourning faces when the great man left us. The characters in Peterson's life, and there are many, all have a yarn of their own about the great MP, and that's the best thing about this book. Doherty has stepped back and let them tell them. It's an essential vocal history of a true surfing legend for every surf fan.



Music – Jack Tully

The best sad music makes you feel happy about your misery, helps you to own it in a way that legitimises the pain of your sad and lonely life. Jack Tully discovered this early through the Blues, that seemingly simple genre that's notoriously impossible to master. But Tully didn't walk the path well trodden by generations of Blues devotees who seek to emulate their heroes. Instead he's fused them with the sounds he grew up loving to create a rich tapestry of what you could maybe call Sunshine Blues, not far removed from the likes of Neil Young and a few Velvet Underground songs. His latest offering *The Keeping* is in this vein showcasing Tully's incredible musianmanship as well as helping you feel pretty damn great about the fact life can actually suck balls sometimes. Dude is going places. www.jacktullymusic.com



JOCK SERONG'S SHORT HISTORY OF...

ROCK OFFS

The history of rock jumps in Australia is lost in the mists of time. It seems reasonable to conclude that the practice came into its own with the shortboard revolution: it's hard to picture the Duke scuttling over a rockshelf with his thirty-five kilo redwood behemoth and nimbly flinging himself and the giant lumber onto the incoming surf.

A rock jump first appeared on film in McCoy's classic 1978 flick *A Day in the Life of Wayne Lynch*, in which Lynchy and Maurice Cole fling themselves off one sandstone cliff near Port Campbell in order to deceive you about the fact that they're actually surfing off another. For a second the jump looks like going awry: both men are clobbered by a series of foamy set waves before they get clear and who knows, maybe the edit spared us some carnage. You'd have to ask Jack.

The sandstone jump-offs in western Vic present a hazard quite unlike the ones further north: the rock is formed into flat sheets that have dissolved into millions of small, jagged protuberances, lending the surface a texture not unlike the unfinished Death Star. This stuff can tear into flesh and fibreglass with ease.

Up the east coast it's boulders and their attendant hazards – shellfish, barnacles and slime – that have plagued surfers down through the years. Rocking off and getting in at big Lennox is akin to being rolled up in a doona and beaten by Mafiosi. As a junior, Mick Fanning came a cropper on the rocks at Burleigh and smashed his face on a boulder so hard he was off to hospital without even getting wet, proving even the best can fluff it.

Nowhere else in surfing is the surfer's personal cool so openly gambled. Mark Visser made a helpful YouTube vid on the topic - his formula: pick your path, commit, and jump front-on. Which underlines the fundamental terrors here – sometimes the only safe option is to make big distance across the rockshelf while the water's down, hoping like hell that you get an ideal foamball to jump onto, because the distance is too great to run back again mid-set. The immutable law of reef biology is that the further you get towards the water, the more algae, weed and vicious pointed shellfish await you. Running forwards gets more dangerous and perversely more necessary. Committing is the golden rule.



On the west coast, it's urchins. Never in evolutionary history has so much defensive hardware been deployed in the protection of so little edible flesh. Jakes and Red Bluff are the urchin spine-removal capitals of the known world.

Some more locational classics: the Snapper backwash – locals ride the returning wave off the rock into perfect position and then get pitted right in front of you while you sweep uselessly down to Rainbow with the rest of the blow-ins. Outside Indicators at Raglan eats surfboard fins like All Blacks eat possum pie. And Punta de Lobos, Chile's mega left, is the big daddy nightmare rock-off of them all. You have to jump off a cliff, swim a churning crazy channel praying for no sets, climb up some rocks, still praying a set doesn't smash you through the little razor-barnacled rock chute, then make another massive jump into more churning whitewash. And it doesn't even put you out the back.

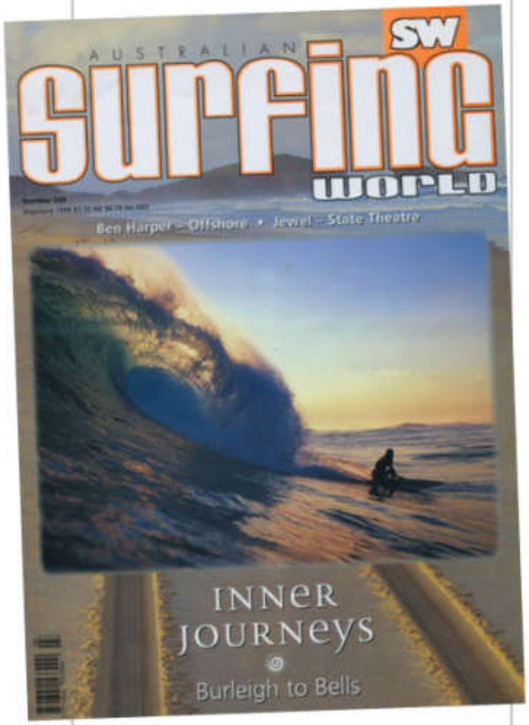
Rock-offs might be a little passe these days. Check the footage on Kookslams of a guy throwing his board off a twenty-foot high pier and then jumping…straight onto it. More successfully, Mark Healy jumped off a pitching trawler in heavy fog at Mavericks. And Visser jumped out of a plane (for reasons which aren't entirely clear) alongside his ski and boards, attached to a separate parachute, in search of mid-ocean monsters in *Operation Deep Blue*.

Just remember, for all of these, there's an equal and opposite reaction. When you're done surfing, you've got to work out how the hell to get in.

Opposite: Mikey Brennan at Shipstern's jump rock. Photo by Andrew Chisholm. (We did it Chiz! We did it man!)
Illustration by Nanda Ormond. Inset by Corbin Nash



SW 249
1999
$5.50



Cool cover... Joel 'Jobsworth' Fitzgerald by Frank Funk

Cool ad... Kutalines "Get your Free Surfgod with every pair of winter pants."

Cool quote... "At crowded Kirra I saw a tiny teenage girl drop in on Luke Egan on a grinding Big Groyne barrel, pretty well stuff him into the pit and race off down the line, menace burning in her eyes." – Kidman

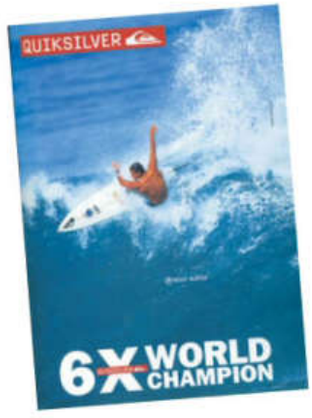
Cool musician... Jewel Kilcher at The State Theatre, Sydney.





Cool lifestyle shot... Layne Beachley in her grommet days, complete with local sponsors hand-drawn in texta. It's not hard to see why she was nicknamed Gidget.

Cool pre-freesurfer era confusion... "Rasta's made some interesting career decisions lately. He bailed out on the Jetty Surf Pro Junior at Bells, to go home for the singlefin contest at Burleigh, which he won. And he brushed the Newcastle WQS event to hang out with the old blokes at the Noosa Festival. And this day, the only photo he got was staring through an empty barrel."



Cool caption Part 1... Fatty and Skinny went to New Guinea. "Shut up Noodles. I'm not fat." "Well suck your neck in, Beau."



Cool contest description... "The idea of the Mal Meet is to get the old boys back in the water, a bit like Bluff's Board event in Makaha, except here most of the participants are blind drunk by about 11am, and get through eight or more kegs and several kilos of burnt sausages as they surf the day away."

Cool caption Part 2... Mick O'Rafferty prepares for his HSC computer exam. Things went horribly wrong, however, when he nose-dripped into his keyboard and blew up his computer.



Cool poetry... "I met some girl, but now she's gone. And then she's there again, but now I'm too straight to talk with her. Too straight to talk with her in the same way I did last night before she disappeared, only to reappear in my thoughts forever."

Cool quote... "Your sun sign actually relates to what you do in life and I'm just an artistic person who loves identifying with creativity and art and expression. That's modified by your moon sign and all that, but I'm not going to get too groovy here because I'm sure I'll get shot down in flames by the yobfest mentality." – Martin Tullemans

Cool history lesson... "If you were a convict, you're a feral, you're a bastard, get out of England to the hottest, most alien place... If you were a convict you got overworked, beaten and thrown in a stable like an animal at night." – Gary Elkerton





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AS JOCK SERONG TAPS INTO THE PSYCHE OF SURFERS ON THE NSW NORTH COAST



THE OBSERVER EFFECT

There's a scientific principle which says there are some things in the natural world that you can't observe without simultaneously influencing them. This is known as the Observer Effect; grounded in physics not biology, it nevertheless seems an apt way to think about the current crisis engulfing the north coast of New South Wales.

I'd travelled to the north coast to watch people watching the water for sharks. That's more or less what was happening there: eyes on the sea like never before. There's an inevitable feedback loop to this behaviour: people do indeed start seeing sharks. Which tells them there are more sharks in the water, which causes more people to start looking for sharks. And so on.

The notes that follow are a record of my conversations with the watchers. As near as I could, I've left their thoughts unchallenged by background research or my own opinions. It's possible that what I wound up with is a story about people, not sharks.

Belongil, 10:30 Friday night

Standing on a wide grassy bluff overlooking the sea, brushed by a light offshore under a full moon. The light on the Cape to the south sweeps round. Nothing but the gentle lapping of a small swell on the banks. Brightly illuminated in the moonlight, the ocean looks benign and welcoming.

As the plane had touched down I'd switched the phone on and read about the month-long recovery of Craig Ison, attacked by a great white at Evans Head a month ago. The story featured photos of his mangled limbs: gone was the easy-going forgiveness of victims past. He wanted nets and drumlines, and he made clear he'll never get in the water again. He tried to give words to his ordeal: it was otherwise unimaginable. His adamance – about sharks and about himself – felt entirely understandable.

North Wall Ballina – lookout carpark, Saturday dawn.

English tourists shivering as they wait for the sun to appear on the eastern horizon. The spray of breaching humpbacks – so many of them - turns orange in the early light. There are fishing boats working in and out of the rivermouth. Inshore, North Wall and Speeds are two or three foot and clean. There are countless banks between the rock wall and the point up at Trestles.

There are no surfers in the water.

The surfers are in their cars, and huddled beside other surfers' car windows. They're scoping, like surfers everywhere along the coast right now, their conversation interrupted by the universal asides – aww, check this one – but none of them are moving. It's as though they have some pressing commitment, or a foot in plaster. It's surreal.

I chat to a guy of thirty-odd, relaxed but firmly remaining in his driver's seat. He's talking to another guy who hasn't surfed in three weeks. He says the first guy – the one in the car – is a major local shredder. That guy says he'll go out at present "only if it's really, really good." They agree the situation's gnarly. First guy is "generally against culling, I have been for years, but now…I'd agree with it for one or two sharks if they know they're the ones responsible.

"Matt (Lee) got mauled over there (pointing) and Tadashi (Nakahara) was killed there (pointing 200 metres along)." How would it feel to be able to point to two such marks at your local, within a short paddle of each other?

A boat hangs around, maybe half a kilometre off Boulders. They think that's the "tagging boat", though they don't get how it's helping. "Maybe



Eerie times at dawn and dusk on the NSW Far North Coast. (Mitchell)

long-term, but it's not doing much for us right now, is it?"

They don't want to overstate it because surfers never want to overstate anything, but they seem helpless.

In the air: pelicans, a light plane, a drone.

They reckon the tagging boat has got a couple of small ones (there's an assumption in everything said that the unspecified sharks are great whites). It's rumoured the tagging boat has seen several much larger sharks.

A barrel spits. Someone hoots. No-one moves.

There are random padlocks clipped onto the barrier wires on the lookout, Pont Neuf-style. Lovers. One of these guys says he might've surfed through these times a few years ago, but now he's got a couple of kids. It's always interesting how kids change people's thinking about risk.

At 7am, an hour after sunrise, two lonely figures paddle out at North Wall. One immediately gets barrelled. A big pod of dolphins cruises south towards the surfers.

The guys in the car think we've fished out all the inshore fish but protected their main predator. We've protected the whales too. Maybe the balance is out. The watchers don't like the bird activity. They don't like the heavy rains with their muddy brown runoff, the smelly water that follows, "dead cows floating out the rivermouth."

There's apparently guys doing home-made stripey sprays on the bottoms of their boards. Which reminds me: Blakey's left me a board to use while in town. It's yellow.

There's a girl leaning on the barrier wires, talking to a tall guy and occasionally scanning her phone. She looks lean and focussed: focussed on the surf, not the scenery. Clasje Goebel's a competitive surfer, and is down from North Straddie, studying environmental science and marine science as a double major at Lismore. Caspar Lewis is studying media there and lives on the hill behind Lighthouse Beach. He loves being in Ballina: it's more of a community than Byron to him. Byron's where he goes if he wants to party.

I explain to Clasje what I'm doing here. She laughs and takes the phone out again.

"I just had this text from a mate," she says, and then reads it out.

"The scientist dude who spoke at the Lennox shark meeting says that every single attack happened either just before or just after a full moon & suggests that it's OK to surf at the moment but really advises to stay out of the water on 30th, 31st& 1st."

Today's the 29th. We both laugh. She scrolls a bit and finds another one.

"The shark spotters say every day they spot one at north wall."

These two consider themselves conservationists and indeed speak with all the terminology one would expect from conservationists, but they're not partisans. As one of them says, "you gotta listen to the commercial fishermen."

Either by temperament or as a result of the courses she's studying, Clasje's carefully rational. "People think North Straddie's pretty sharky, but it's just a healthy ecosystem. I come from a big surfing and fishing family and I'm still surfing."

We agree that maybe the "shark spotters" in the text message are people who want to see sharks and will interpret any movement that way.

Birds start diving at the water as we speak, and a chopper appears. It's 7:30.

Walking down the beach just after Caspar and just before Clasje, my mind is set on rationality.

"THE QUIET SPOTS ARE EMPTY NOW AND THE BUSY PLACES ARE PACKED. I WON'T GO DOWN TO THE EMPTY BEACHES BY MYSELF ANYMORE."

DANNY WILLS

Mind over matter, nothing to see here. Even allowing for the undeniable reality of Tadashi's death, of Matt Lee's injuries, of the cluster of other incidents along this coast recently, there's still ample comfort to be had in the numbers. There are now ten or fifteen surfers floating in the corner beside the north wall.

But there's that bloody full moon, the 'scientist dude' and his list of cursed dates. There's the whales and the baitballs everywhere, with their diving bloody birds. There's the yellow board (a phenomenon I specifically believe to be bollocks) under my arm. Crossing the last of the squeaking sand and into the shallows, the water's so much warmer than down south. Everyone out there appears to be content in their own world. Yet I'm distinctly uncomfortable.

The water's clear. The sun's out. It's fairly shallow. I'm looking at my watch. Half an hour will do. That's something I've never told myself about a surf in three foot barrels. By the time I reach the pack and find Caspar, the chopper's overhead and a light plane hangs in the air higher up. The drone's buzzing around somewhere. The numbers in the water are steadily building, as though the spell's been broken. It's a glorious late winter Saturday.

After a couple of waves I've successfully distracted myself and dark thoughts are replaced by the ordinary mental chatter of any old session. A bigger set wave appears and I drop late, spearing the nose straight into the trough and hurling myself over the handlebars. The rolling's not too bad but it's enough to snap the legrope and my initial reaction is, well, at least I'm separated from the damn yellow board. The explosion of the peak turns the clear water into a fizzing sandy churn. Then a few other thoughts start crowding in like twitchy strangers in a bar. The dates. The baitballs. The full moon. The recent past.

I'm about a hundred metres from the beach. I start swimming, slowly at first. Then my thoughts turn to my legs. If I kick I'll go faster. But if I kick I might convey panic. The flashing white soles of my feet in the stirred water: I can picture them so clearly. So I start swimming faster. The board's nowhere to be seen. Faster. I can see a woman on the beach looking straight at me. Why's she looking at me?

They're long minutes, but still my best time for the hundred. When my feet touch sand I'm still not satisfied and I run the remainder of the distance. On dry sand, I immediately feel like a fool.

There's a guy changing into a wettie in the carpark. Maybe fifty, has the hardened look of someone who's surfed in one place for a lifetime.

"Have you surfed here all your life?" I ask him.

"Yep," he says, shorts around his ankles. I realise this is a poorly timed interview request.

He tells me the crowds are "way down." He says that two or three years ago, nobody even talked about great whites, let alone saw one. "It's great whites that are the worry. Nobody's got an issue with bronzies or bulls." As he goes on, I can see that the shark issue saddens him in a way that transcends sadness for the victims. "We had it all here – the climate, the waves, no biteys. Now we got biteys." He tells me he's got mates who are commercial fishermen, "and one guy, he fishes the Pinnacle, just off the back of The Point (Lennox). He's seeing a big great white out there every other day, and he never used to see 'em. And these guys know what they're talking about."

He's always been against culling but now – he shrugs – "I'm tending towards it, yeah. Shoot the bastards." But he immediately agrees that he can't see how it would help. He tells me he has a mate who has a dental practice, "smart guy, you know, the kinda guy you'd expect wouldn't say it, but he reckons we should cull em." His theory is that the great whites are following the whale migration up the coast, gradually appearing further and further north. "And the fish have been fished out offshore*, so they're coming in closer." (*Note: a variant on this idea often arises: the fish have been fished out inshore, so the sharks are turning to other sources of food.)

Although he acknowledges the situation is serious, he thinks the jumping at shadows is making things worse. "The bloody chopper circled the rivermouth the other day and then a boat came and sent us in because there was a shark in the river. Of course there are bloody sharks in the river – it's only a worry when we're told about it!"



After a lifetime spent shredding these waters with nary a thought of Great Whites, Danny Wills admits to being rattled by the number of encounters over the past year. (Onorati)

I drive from Ballina north towards Byron as the sun rises higher and the day grows into the kind of sparkling beauty that has drawn people here for generations. On the way I slow down to look out at Sharpes Bay, where there are good numbers in the water. Hard to tell if it's just the bright light that's chased away the spookiness of dawn, or if the lure of an offshore Saturday is enough to extinguish the worry, but three dozen surfers would be about par, wouldn't it?

Under the shady banksias of the Broken Head carpark I meet up with Jock Barnes, former QS surfer and a long-time Lennox local. He's involved himself in the anti-fracking movement and along the way developed a knack for putting a position succinctly. As he talks to me there's a constant stream of campervans coming and going, disgorging tanned Europeans with their rented epoxy super-fishes.

Jock thinks hard before he speaks. "On the one hand it's fantastic because all that activity tells you the ecosystem's really healthy, but on the other hand it poses a threat. If I have that feeling (of dread) I respond to it. I get out. The problem is that now there's so much talk, and so much happening, that it's harder to know if I'm having a truly intuitive moment.

"One of my favourite things about surfing the north coast is that you can get a peak to yourself. But it's changed where I'd choose to surf - I'd think twice about the walls at Ballina and Tallows because there's so much traffic coming past the Cape. Two of my all-time favourite spots, Cosy Corner and south wall Ballina, I'm avoiding for the time being. I like to surf by myself, and you just wouldn't do it there.

"I knew Tadashi from when he first came out here ten years ago. From hearing of his attack, safety in numbers had nothing to do with it. There were plenty of people in the water, and plenty on the beach to help. But it didn't save him.

"WA's had a high frequency of encounters, but now it's close to home and current. But it's important to understand it's not isolated to this coast. It's happening worldwide. We need to be engaging our scientific minds about this. It scares me that a decision could be made without that counsel. But undoubtedly there needs to be some sort of action.

Whatever idea a community comes up with is going to be invalid without intelligent scientific backing. I can sympathise with anyone who's been affected by these tragedies - as I say, Tadashi was a friend - but we have to step back, take a breath. I just think we shouldn't be rash about it."

Danny Wills is draped over the rail on the lookout platform, scoping a huge flat bank up near the point and a hollower shorebreak in the middle of the bay. Neither is crowded. His is an interesting perspective because he's both a lifelong surfer on this coast and also a retailer.

"Yeah, great whites have never been on the radar up here until now," he says. "We've never been worried about 'em here. Even when Marty Ford died (in March 1982 at Tallows), that was a tiger, not a white.

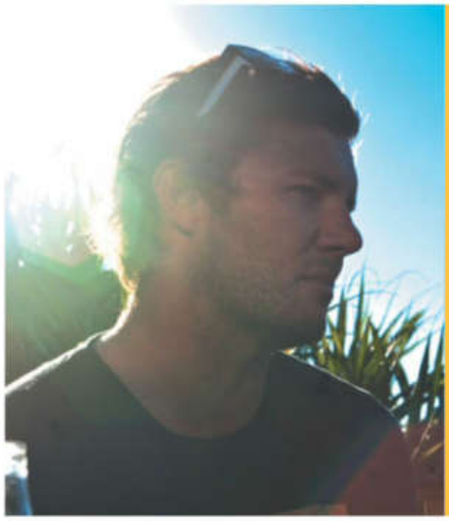
"I've heard so many theories. And I really don't have one of my own. Maybe more marine parks, protected species. Dad was on the mullet crews and he's an old fisho. He says he hasn't seen baitfish like this in years."

I ask him if there's confusion between white sharks feeding on mammals (that is, the great migrations of humpbacks passing this coast) and feeding on fish (i.e. the baitfish shoals). "There was footage the other day of a great white at Tallows, definitely feeding on the baitfish. And there was a little – when I say 'little' I mean ten foot – white hassling people in the Bay last year."

"I did find myself buying into the bullshit a little," he admits. "A month ago, I stopped surfing for about two weeks. It was too much for me to handle. But surfing in shallow, clear water – no worries. The quiet spots are empty now and the busy places are packed. I won't go down to the empty beaches by myself anymore.

"Culling? It's touchy. Oh man. Definitely, we should get rid of one when we know it's been involved in multiple incidents. And if my kid had been attacked, I'd say fuck 'em. Kill 'em all. You really can't comment unless you've been in that position. Ask Mick – that'd be interesting. I've turned down requests to do media about this because I'm scared I'll say the wrong thing, and that thing's only an opinion in my head. I like the idea of tagging em. Maybe we should go back to that idea. Something needs to be done.





"IF I HAVE THAT FEELING (OF DREAD) I RESPOND TO IT. I GET OUT. THE PROBLEM IS THAT NOW THERE'S SO MUCH TALK, AND SO MUCH HAPPENING, THAT IT'S HARDER TO KNOW IF I'M HAVING A TRULY INTUITIVE MOMENT."

JOCK BARNES

Opposite: Heads at The Pass have have been twitching nervously on sun up and sun down despite the fact a loose log is a more realistic health hazard than any big fish. (Crawford)

"For sure, it's having an economic effect on the town. I don't even know the last time I sold a surfboard. The retail numbers are way down – maybe 20%."

Mid-conversation a stranger wanders up and says "thirty guys just paddled in at Sharpes because the chopper circled and a boat rocked up. I think they tagged one right there." So much for the happy crowd I saw.

"Here's another theory – they're females, they're fattening up and they'll have their young and piss off."

Broken Head beach, mid morning – two foot, offshore, twenty out

In the water at Broken Head, the chopper flies over constantly. And when it does, everybody looks at it. Some of them don't want to be caught looking at it – just a sly incline of the neck for a second. But they all look. Of course they do. It's not an interest in helicopters, it's a fervent wish that it's going to keep flying straight and not make a loop.

There's good numbers in the water here, despite the ever-present baitballs and diving birds. There's no real sense of menace under the mid-morning sun. A guy paddles past. Shaved head and neck tatts teamed with a thick biker mo. He looks gnarly enough that I have a hunch which way he'll go on this.

Me: Scuse me mate. Random question – are you in favour of culling sharks?
Him: Shut no, bro.
Me: My God, you're a Kiwi.
Him: End proud of ut.
Me: Do sharks worry you?
Him: Not one fucken but. Luv and lit luv, eh bro.

Down the street, the chopper maintains its overhead vigil. By now I'm feeling like Ray Liotta in *Goodfellas: Now I'm sure we're being tailed. My plan was to go to her mother's and unload the guns…*

Into a surfshop to replace the legrope. When I ask whether he's still surfing, the proprietor scratches his head and laughs. "We all used to avoid each other. Now we wanna hang out. Sharks bring people together!" More seriously, he says the mood in town is affecting his board hire business quite badly, but that clothing sales march on unaffected. He thinks the mood will pass, and sooner rather than later.

Fletcher St, Byron Bay – half-full café, no apparent wind – 1:00 pm

Perry Bartholomew and his business partner Rob Dalton have owned the Byron Bay Dive Centre for twelve years, long enough to have a good base against which to assess the impact of shark sightings on trade. Both Perry and Rob are surfers as well as divers, giving them a rare under-and-over perspective on vulnerability. Perry's also a kiteboarder and a father of three children aged ten, eight and five. He has pale green eyes and a lethal poker face, and he approaches the interview cautiously (he later laughs off his reticence, explaining that he just can't stand being misquoted).
"I'm certainly thinking about sharks at the moment – from both a personal and business perspective - but not to the level that I'd discourage my kids from having adventures in the ocean. I feel more comfortable about them diving and snorkelling at Julian Rocks than surfing inshore.

"I haven't looked at our launch records to assess whether it's affecting business - I can't control it, so why analyse it? I reckon snorkelling's changed but diving not so much. Divers are more accommodating of sharks than surfers - they feel less vulnerable (whether they actually are or not). I think the noise and bubbles you create as a diver are a deterrent to sharks too.

"I'm pretty comfortable with the whole thing. There's definitely a spike in incidences, but to me there's always going to be a place and a year where the highest number occurs. This year there's been a lot of baitfish in the Bay. It's not sharks that keep me out of the water – it's life.

"I'm an emergency services worker, a fireman. The things I see – God, there's so many things that can go wrong in your life, and you're worrying about the ocean? These people rang up a while ago and cancelled their snorkelling - they were going to drive down from Brisbane. It was unbelievable. I felt like telling them I'd been to a quadruple fatality on that road the previous night."



Lennox Head. Safety in numbers. (Frank)

I mention to Perry that a common refrain has been "but we have to do something."

"The harder question is: do we actually have to do anything? The political mirror image of "we have to do something" is "I have to do something" – that's why politicians will announce measures, so they're seen to be acting. No-one's been asking the dive industry. We have a protocol whereby we shut down operations when there's a beach alert. But we haven't seen a single shark outside of a grey nurse or a wobbegong all season.

"I consider myself a conservationist. The company works hard at being sustainable. We're educators, and we're very conscious of the marine park (from Brunswick Heads to Lennox and out to three nautical miles). And it works – clients will say to themselves 'I saw that turtle, and I won't throw that cigger butt.' If there's another fatality and the state talks about setting up drumlines off Byron, I would be vocal against that. Hopefully they've laughed off the netting thing. Look at the animals that get caught in them: turtles, dolphins… every year there's a whale. And because of the geography here, nets would get heaps more of those animals.

"You protect the white sharks and their numbers go up. Meanwhile, surfer numbers go up massively. All the numbers are up, so of course interactions will increase. There's so many sightings at present, but there's so many eyes in the sky. I'm very anti-drones. All they'll do is cause more beach closures, and that'll cause panic – it's a chain reaction. I still don't know whether it's an issue or not. Clearly it's an issue for the families involved. I'd never make light of it."

Wategos, late afternoon. One foot, onshore, five out on mals.

The lighthouse looks over the bay like a fat Victorian gent in a waistcoat. Julian Rocks out back, and halfway there a cluster of kayaks; the paddlestrokes like the slow progress of a millipede.

The surfers here are all international travellers. After a near-collision, I find myself chatting to two Spanish girls, Nuria and Alba. They're from Barcelona, and they're deft enough on the longboards to suggest they've done plenty of surfing in their time.

Both have been out of the water for a month, and this is their first surf back. They went back to Spain in the meantime and watched Facebook from a horrified distance; the sightings, the water clearances, the incidents. They admit they're scared, despite their confident demeanours. They'd only surf Wategos and the Pass.

"I'll stay out of the water if there are more incidents," says Nuria. "I think Europeans simply believe there's sharks everywhere here: not just now and not just Byron Bay." By that logic, she thinks that any panic over sharks right now is unlikely to affect visitor numbers, or their enthusiasm for the whole Wicked Van experience. "I think Australians are…" she rolls her eyes, searching for the English she wants to get this right. "They're brought up this way, so they're less concerned, yes?"

At their home near Broken Head, I'm leaning on Dave Rastovich and Lauren Hill's kitchen bench, afternoon sunlight streaming in through the windows. There's fruit everywhere, and jars of strange, fragrant rocks which turn out to be frankincense and myrrh. There's no gold, but Dave passes for a wise man.

Dave and Lauren's natural inclination is to place an issue like shark numbers in a wider



If there's one thing surfers don't want to see, it's the chopper coming back for a second look. (Parry)

context. It's part of what makes them fascinating to interview – the conversation starts out small, then expands like a gas balloon.

Dave's heard reports that white shark activity in California is at an all-time high. So why both sides of the Pacific simultaneously? Could it relate to the building El Nino, the whole bulk nutrient mass of the Pacific being shunted around by warm currents and taking the predators with it?

He shrugs.

"Maybe. There's certainly been baitballs and bird piles like never before. It's insane: Broken Head and Lennox are so full of life right now. I surfed four-foot Lennox alone, the day they were going to run the Grom comp. There's normally about 600 groms there and all the soccer parents with their video cameras. And either someone saw a shark or it was a reaction to the earlier incidents and they called the whole thing off. I watched it for a while and I couldn't resist. I paddled out. I was getting waves right through, hollow and flat out. It was unbelievable. I got home and rang George (Greenough) and I said 'George, now I know what it felt like to surf Lennox on your own in the seventies! It's amazing!' and he said to me (does pitch-perfect Greenough drawl) 'I know, David, I know. That's how it used to be. All… the…time.'"

Lauren's interested in what the responses have been from locals so far. Perry Bartholomew's perspective in particular interests them. "Yeah, I think he's right," says Dave. "We humans won't tolerate a situation where we're not in control. I don't think we have to do anything at all. This is what the ocean is doing right now, but that'll change."

We talk about the whales moving up the coast in tremendous numbers; how the white sharks and big tigers predate upon them when the calves are vulnerable on the surface and the mothers are low on nutrition from migrating, and exhausted.

I ask Lauren whether she thinks increased prevalence of sharks is a sign of a healthy ecosystem, or of some other kind of pathology we don't know about. That is, must we accept that more predators might be an inevitable outcome of our conservation efforts? "Well," she says, "With all the imbalances we've created, maybe what we've done is turn up the amplifier: increase the intensity of all these natural relationships."

Dave's surfed in some of the most beautiful environments on earth but also, as he points out, in some of the worst. "In places like Japan and parts of Indo and California, the sea is so denuded of life that surfing feels sad and solitary. In other parts of the world people are surprised that the ocean can be like this" - he sweeps an arm out vaguely towards where Broken Head would be – "the swarms of fish and birds and whales and dolphins."

The Pass: one foot, offshore, 55 out. Average board length: nine foot six.

Getting changed in the carpark ($4 an hour), I spy a demographic I haven't yet questioned. Retirees.

I sidle over to Paul and Maree from Wurtulla on the Sunny Coast. They seem unconcerned by my hastily-wrapped modesty towel, and they accept my claim that I'm a journalist. He's in tall sports socks and runners; she rocks a visor.

They're staying at Kingscliff. They think it's the longlining that strips out all the fish offshore. "I go fishing on the Gold Coast," says Paul, "and I can't catch anything at all these days. Longlining brings the sharks in closer looking for food."

“WE HAD IT ALL HERE – THE CLIMATE, THE WAVES, NO BITEYS. NOW WE GOT BITEYS.”



Business as usual for the backpacker set. (Crawford)

Paul likes to go for a swim, and he’s still doing that. He’s “not too worried”, but Maree looks at him sidelong.

“I like to know that he’s come back okay,” she says. “It’s a bit awful, isn’t it.” She casts a look at my wetsuited legs: “Aren’t you worried?” I remind her that I’m a journalist.

Interview concluded, I check my phone. Large white spotted at Marion Bay, Tasmania, and everyone ordered out of the water. It’s like that game where you whack the hippos with a hammer. You hit ‘em here, and they just pop up there. How can culling work in such a scenario?

The sand build-up at the Pass, like Broken Head and Lennox and probably a dozen other points, is incredible. Wide and flat and perfect. Longboards are flying everywhere, and dropping in is the rule here, not the exception. If these people are nervous, it seems they’re taking it out on each other.

There’s a grom staking wave after wave, running back up the edge of the sandbank after each, until the exhaustion catches up with him and he stops momentarily. He’s on a blue and green Mini Simmons and his eyes are pink from the sandy water. He’s Manny, aged nine, and he goes to the local primary, Byron Bay Public. His mum Celia is nearby, surfing a mal. I get the impression they surf together a lot, these two. It’s pretty cool.

“He just jumped out of the water because he thought he saw something,” laughs Celia. “I told him to calm down.” Manny’s now back at it, and laughing it off, slightly embarrassed. But with the indelicacy of small kids, he points down the beach towards Clarkes and says “that’s where the guy got his leg ripped off”. His mum gently corrects his language, but suddenly I get a clear sense of how random and horrifying such events are, and how they must etch themselves in the psyche of kids. He’ll likely remember that corner of the beach in that way for the rest of his days.

The night before I leave, I stand on the beach at Belongil and watch the beam of the lighthouse searching the ocean under the dreaded full moon. The beam searches, and so do the people with their binoculars, and the drones and the planes and the choppers. Everyone’s searching, all the time now.

Like much of the debate surrounding sharks, the issues facing the north coast towns are complex. Sharks have always been a feature of the Byron beaches, drawn by abattoir offal, then whaling, not to mention periodic surges in baitfish populations. Back in 1962, Bruce Brown came to Byron with Paul and John Witzig to film Waterlogged, and they reportedly watched a huge white shark cruise through the line-up at Wategos. Had they not been there, and been watching with experienced eyes, we would never have known of the shark’s presence.

What’s changed with the years has been the extent of human presence and observation: more of us in the water, and more of us watching it with ever greater technological resources. If we look more, we will see more. The question is, what will we do about what we see?

PREMIUM

SURF TOURS





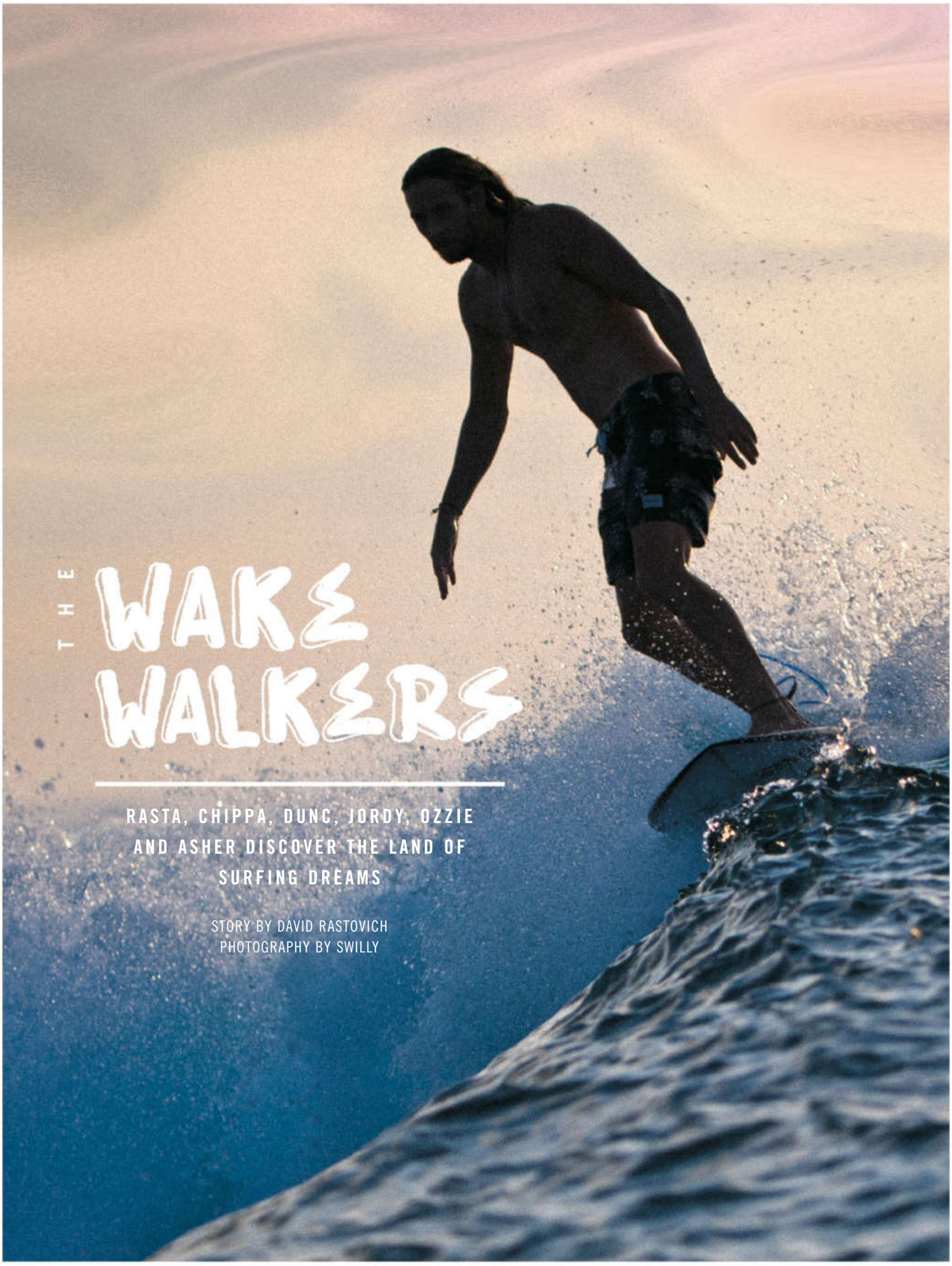


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THE WAKE WALKERS

RASTA, CHIPPA, DUNC, JORDY, OZZIE AND ASHER DISCOVER THE LAND OF SURFING DREAMS

STORY BY DAVID RASTOVICH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SWILLY



Duncan McNicol ponders the philosophical ramifications of the metaphysical universe overflowing into our conscious experience of daily life and in doing so creates a lobe melting state of mind in which fanasy becomes the norm and boundaries cease to exist. Or maybe he's just sitting there thinking, "How good is this?" **Previous spread:** Asher Pacey. Wake walker.





Apocalypse Now.



Love boat Chip.



Head dip Chip.



Fun. Fun. Fun. Asher.



Jords. Shaka.



Ashtin.

Hot Chip.





Firewalkers.



Hooray!



Mr T-shirt Face on Isla de Wrong.



Air Jordan.



Team nipples.



Fandunk.



Ash Slash.



Isla De Wrong.



Chip dip.



Dream state.


NO DOGS
GR8 JOB
DONT BE FRIGHTENED YOU'RE ENLIGHTENED
FUCK THE POLICE
FREE WIFI

When asked about this *dream trip* to the Maldives I heard the words more literally than usual and figured "Hey, what if I took down the dreams of this bunch and gave them to a dream reader to gain insights into the surfer's subconscious?"

Some of us care about our sleep dreams, and some of us don't. Others care about our *day* dreams, you know, the kind that culture suggests we follow via the term live the dream. But whatever dream style we jazz to the fun thing is that it's nothing to take too seriously... 'cause it's just a dream.

Us wake walkers say
we dream not just in day,
three to nine dreams a night
flicking REM eyes left and right
moments passed and not yet to be
lucid rapid eye movies
fleet from the pons to the thalamus
inner screen scenes just for us.
What visions unfold in the surfers mind?
What tales untold live between the lines?

Oscar sees folk with crabs in hand
placed on his face to understand
what he keeps from view
what lens does he let the world look through?
And the dream reader says,
"Let this be true, be true let this
to fear not a crustaceous kiss
for often hard shells conceal
all the sweetness that soft hearts feel."
And the crab melts away
to a walker on the waves
Oz sees a man
walking far from land
his feathery feet
keep him from the deep
asked as he's slowing
not what are you doing
not where are you going
just how far remains
of your path on the waves,
obliging he states
my path is far my path is great
he turns to the sun
and journeys on
while the dream reader states,
"Light as he is, he is as light
try as we will, try as we might
our paths nor right
our paths nor wrong
just fluid as the water
of which we walk on."

And just as in song
the dream beat goes on
to the melody of a man
who flies like none can
a wake walker among day sleepers
he flips gravity that keeps us
aquatic apes on a wave's face
as we flap to fly yet stay in place,
through his day dreams with open eyes
he returns home suspended in sky
Chippa lives the dream readers words...
"What has been belongs to those on Earth
what is to come only day dreamers know
in your blue sky mind the future's shown
and you fly as sure as the wind does blow."

The dream reader reveals
only mammals feel
the rush of a sleep full of dreams,
though thin is the layer
between play and player
and the curtain divides more than the scenes.

The next act on stage
is the youngest of age
a gifted young sprite who answers to Lawler,
relentless his play
among Indian waves
yet he drinks not a drop of clear water.
Always in hand is Coke bottle or can
that mutes all his life in sleep land
so the dream reader prays...
"Sweet is the dream, the dream is sweet
though don't let it be the sweet that you eat
for dry as a desert is a sugary brain
and stripped are the dreams like Coke down
the drain".

And flipped are we now like wind to a feather
to brother McNicol our lord of dead leather
who dreams of seven tigers behind hung sarongs
all cracked by his towel to stay where they belong
who dreams of boogie boarders filling the sea
so he lights a beach fire and let's it all be,
melotonin floods McNicol's vast mind
melting the trinity of illusory time,
day life and night life all intertwine
each moment a totem, each object a sign
and the dream reader reels
from how good his dream feels
"Light of the sun, son of the light
proud is the tiger of all of his stripes
bright is the fire that burns day and night,
control can't contain life's luminous flames
so dance like none see and never be tamed..."

To an ethereal spirit the dream reader now looks
whose play is not found inside nor in books
it lives in the wild in the water and trees
in his dance on waves and the way that he breathes
Asher's eyes turn in and his dreamscape conveys
factory storm clouds that take colour away
the world has grown smaller
he can see all its curves
Earth turning to ice a white world undisturbed
our dreamer reader stops and draws in a long breath
knowing many fear life more than they fear death
"...all life is one, one life is all...
this soul hears symphony in the gentle bird call
may we all dream gently and love the spectrums full range
knowing now and forever the only constant is change".

Come and stay at Ozzie and Duncan's Maldivian Island Resort called Thonglandia. The accomo is rudimentary and there are no laws however the wifi is free and you can help yourself to the mountains of shoreline debris most of which is blown out thongs and not a single pair amongst them.



Oz and Dave digs.



Dunctify.



The watchers.



Ashrash.



Back in Australia Duncan McNicol lives in a van but in the Maldives he owns his own island called Thonglandia.



Chip oil.



Rastavibe.



Pocket bread Rasta.



Nasal Ash.



Weeee!



Roof quiv.



Ozdown.



Ash chill.



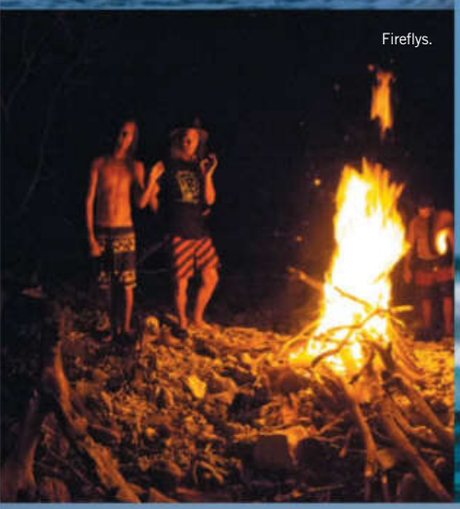
Lawsome.



Twin cylinder Oz poke.



Liquie Desto.



Fireflys.



Jordy whip. Jordy nay nay.



Ozline.



Rasmateo.



Fisheye Ash.



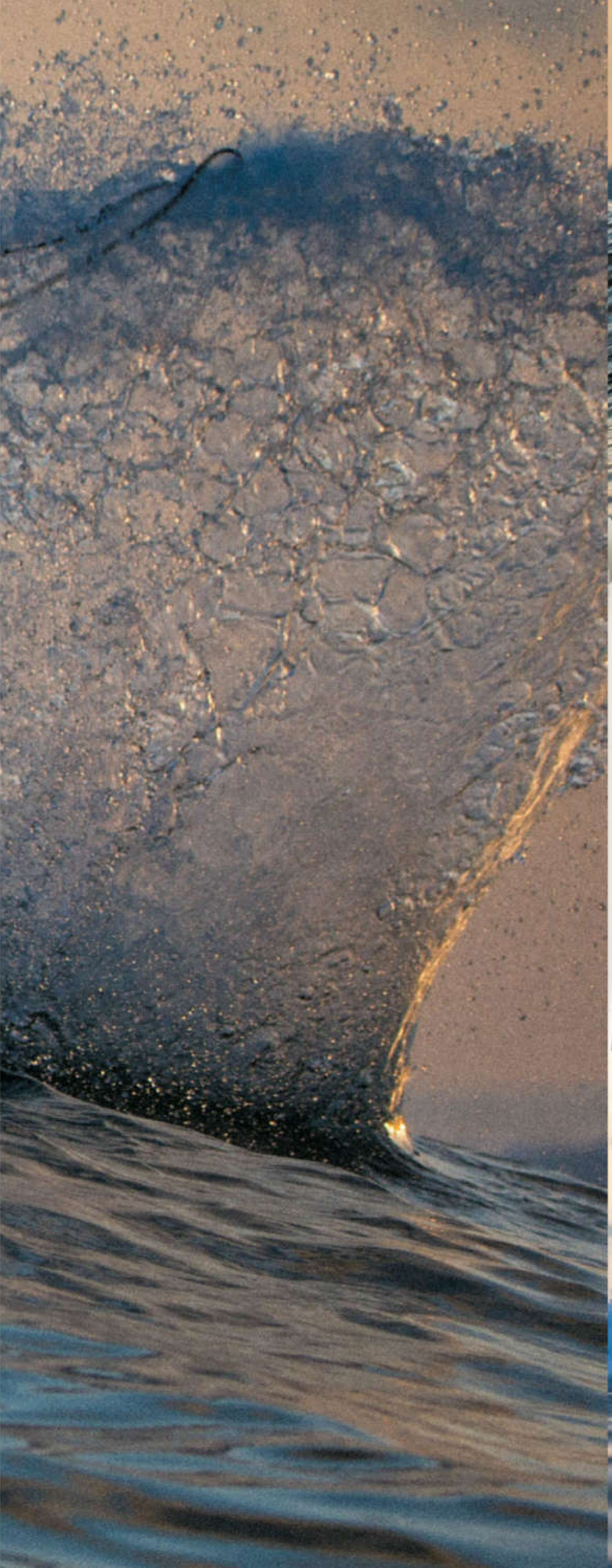
Thonglandia.



Cliptime.



This here is a double page of Chris Chippa Wilson enjoying the dream-like calm of late afternoon surfs in oily silent waters. These waves and conditions are for everyone and they're waiting for you right now... just as soon as you close your eyes and drift off to the land of snu snu.






Aussie Pride





Rastrim.



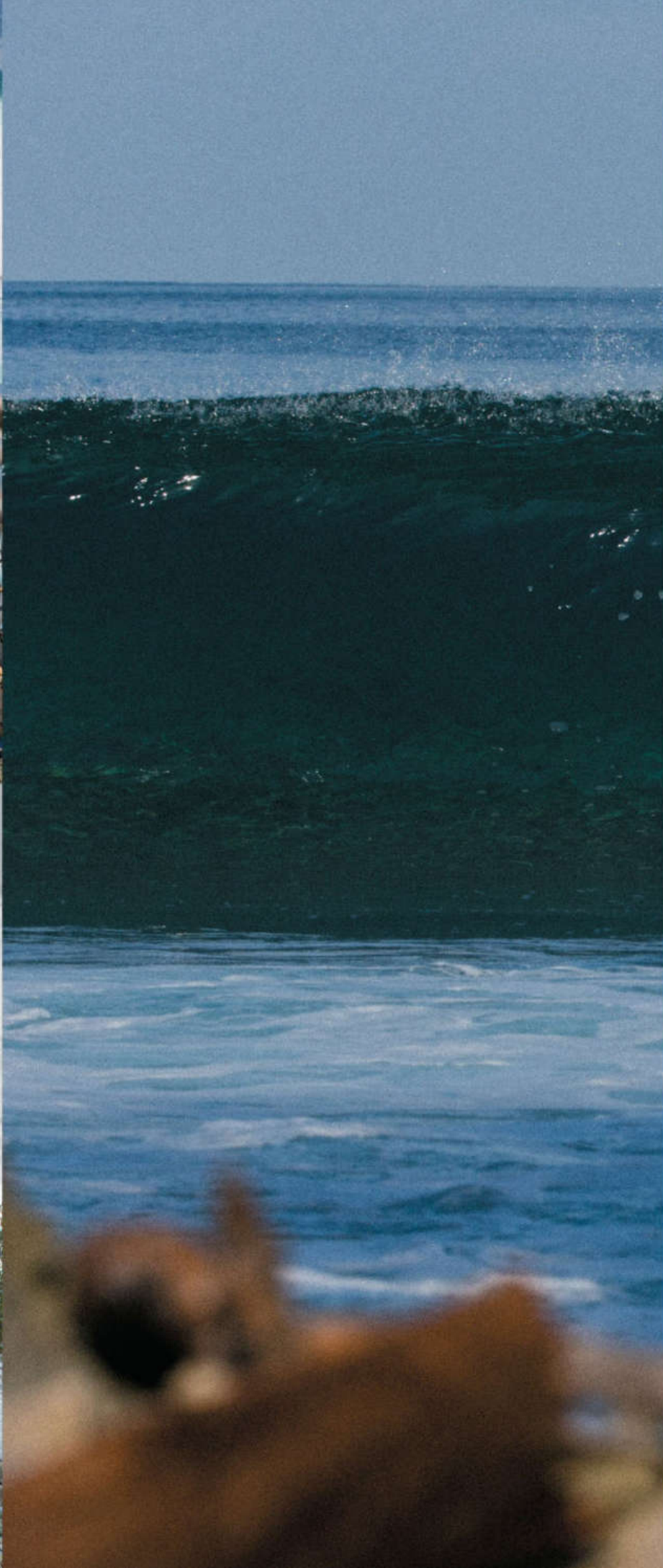
Tins and cigs.



Cookie.



Ash and Louis.





Believe your eyes. This wave breaks like this all day long. Asher.



Ash uppercut.



Loudoggie.



Jordfan.



Duncare.

“DREAMS ARE TODAY’S ANSWERS TO TOMORROW’S QUESTIONS.”

EDGAR CAYCE



Dunc explosion.



Duncballs.



How fun?



So fun.



Larry lookback. Oz.



Tribal zone.



Funboyz.



Asher 360 Fly.

Ozdown.



Take off. Pull in. Jordy.



Ozzzzzzzzzzzie.

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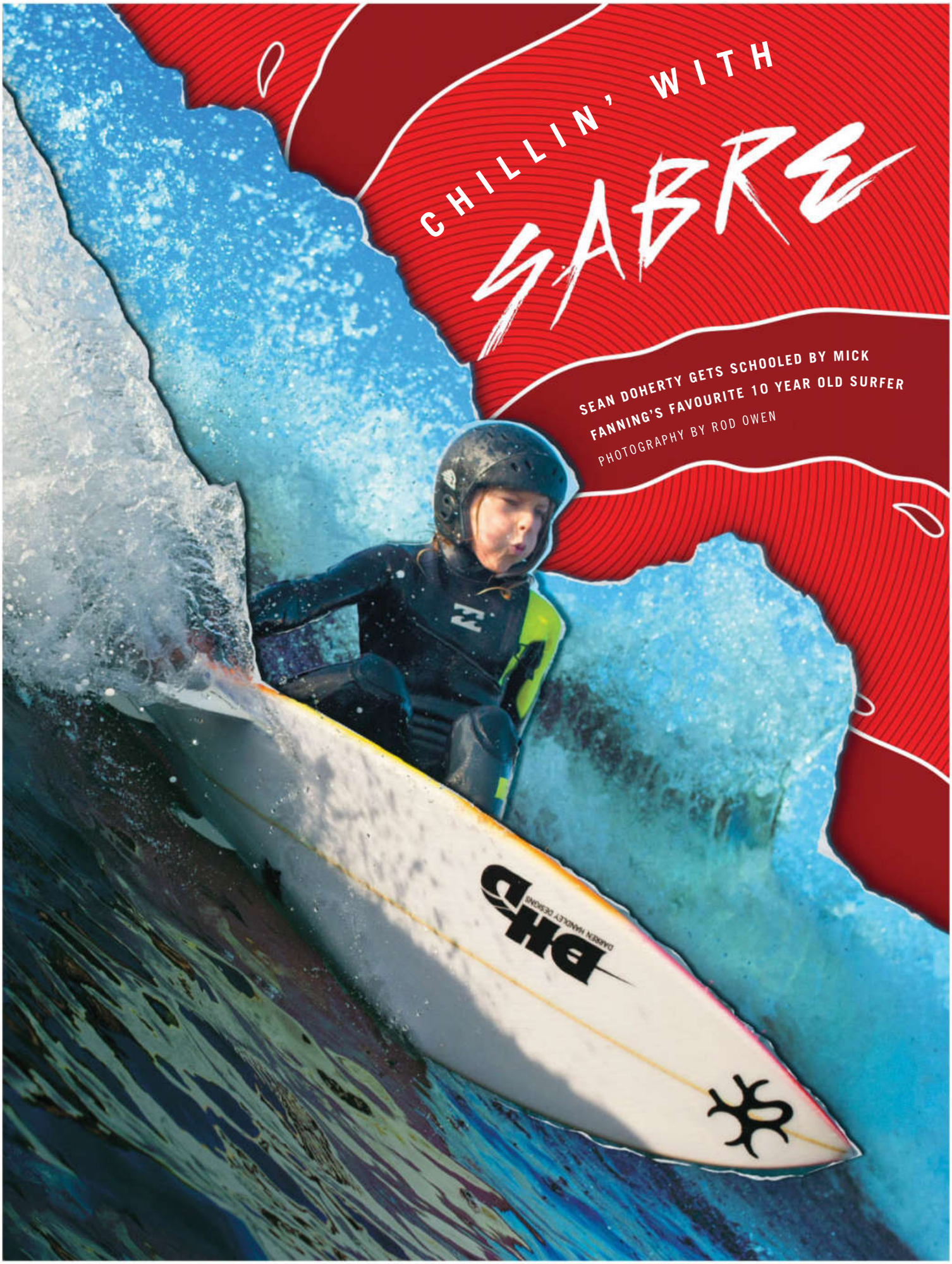
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CHILLIN' WITH
SABRE
SEAN DOHERTY GETS SCHOOLED BY MICK FANNING'S FAVOURITE 10 YEAR OLD SURFER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROD OWEN





As a grown man, and a proud and crabby ol' bastard, it's hard to describe the feeling of being outsurfed by a 10-year-old girl.

After the initial denial that it was actually happening, it made me think deeply and depressingly about my life. I knew this moment would come, a sad sign of inevitable decline, but I expected I might be at least 70 years old when it did. Instead here I was, seemingly in my prime, my ego being shredded by the forehand turn of a killer smurf.

My sense of self-loathing, however, was soon overwhelmed by a sense of unbridled joy. It's impossible, you see, to watch Sabre Norris surf and not be spellbound. "Cute" isn't the right word for her surfing. She's too damn good to be cute. A searing, grab railed, laid over cutback isn't "cute". Steph Gilmore describes Sabre's surfing as "badass", and this was a badass turn. Halfway through the turn, somewhere, surely, a single tear was rolling down Matt Hoy's cheek. On Sabre's next wave she threw a forehand air reverse. Then she got tubed. Blam! Blam! Blam! Between waves she was effervescent company. She never stopped moving and there was no dead air. "How sick was my last one!" "How much fun is this!" And, finally, "That last turn of yours was really, err… interesting."

Sabre Norris loves surfing, skating, black Gaths and meat lovers pizza. Not so keen on asparagus, but hey... who is? **Previous spread:** When Steph Gilmore says Sabre is badass, this is exactly the kind of turn she's talking about.



From left to right: Nazzie, Sockie, Biggie and Sabre. Have you ever seen a cheekier posse in your life? Breaky table Norris style! **Opposite:** Puttin' it all on rail. Sabre rules!

Two weeks earlier her budding surf career reached a major milestone. It wasn't her first contest win, her first million views on Youtube or her first surf with Tyler Wright. Two weeks earlier she'd swapped her trademark white Gath helmet, the one she'd surfed in her whole life, for a black one. Sabre now surfed and looked like a badass.

We were surfing the Cowrie Hole, Sabre's local break in Newcastle, but we'd initially surfed Flat Rock, the heavier wave outside. It was solid, and as Sabre walked to the jump rock I was worried. "We jumping here, Sabe? You sure?" Of course, at this stage I was still under the assumption I was chaperoning her – not the other way around – and I imagined the worst, Sabre getting picked off by a set and dashed against the rocks, me having to explain to her Mum, Brooke, how I'd allowed it to happen. Of course, Sabre simply jumped in, paddled straight to the inside, and dropped into a bomb, a set wave gurgling below sea level, her little arms windmilling furiously as she tried to catch it. She disappeared as the wave took off down the reef, and I kept watch, praying she'd reappear at some stage. Well, she did reappear, a fly away exit on the inside as the wave huffed, Sabre and her black Gath landing clean on the back of the wave and casually blowing her nose like a Pipeline veteran.

It was, as Steph would say, badass.

The Norris family live in Newcastle's East End, and as I drive the backstreets I notice the joint looks nothing like it did when I was living here. Twenty years ago it was the centre of a hardcore punk and surf scene, and I flash back to walking into several of these houses in Alfred and Zaara Streets to find a band set up in the lounge room and a daytime party in full swing.

Well, I walk into the Norris's house and there's the band – Sabre and her little sister, Sockie, anyway – both armed with electric guitars. Sabre has a pink Fender Strat and breaks straight into the opening riff of AC/DC's Hells Bells. Sockie starts playing the Chilli Peppers. Little brother, Biggie is telling me all about his surf that morning while their little sister, Nazzie isn't sure what she should be doing but knows she should be doing something. This happens all at once, the lounge room a beehive of high functioning little legends.

Driving up to Newcastle I wasn't quite sure what I was going to ask Sabre. Like, what do you ask a 10-year-old surfing and skateboarding prodigy to understand what's going on in their life? As it turns out, I needn't have worried about what to ask, because Sabre did all the asking. She put down the guitar and picked up a double-sided page of handwritten questions. The Norris kids are home schooled, wildly inquisitive, and as part of today's lesson I was going to be interviewed.

Sabre's first question sets the tone for the morning. "So," Sabre sits up straight, pulling the paper taut for dramatic effect, "Of all the places you go and surf… where's the best food?" I reply it was probably Namotu Island in Fiji. "So," she asks, her eyes narrowing, "do they, like, have a buffet?" I reply that they do. Three buffets a day actually. Sabre's eyes light up and she listens on like I'm describing Wonkaland. "Three buffets a day? You know my favourite thing ever? I like to surf Snapper all day then go to the Pizza Hut buffet." The all-you-can-eat buffet becomes the central theme of the interview.

We move on, kind of. "So, where's the worst food you've eaten overseas?" I reply that it's all




Midway


Midway
STAINLESS
STEEL
STOCKISTS



A CLIP OF HER NAILING A 540 ON A SKATEBOARD HALF PIPE WENT VIRAL, GENERATING A MILLION YOUTUBE VIEWS.

One of only three women in the world to pull the 540 mctwist on vert, Sabre's skating has seen her become an internet sensation.

pretty good, but that the food in America is a little fast and fatty for my liking. "But," Sabre stammers, incredulous, "I just thought America would be great because they have heaps of buffets there." I explain I'm more an *a la carte* kinda man. Sabre looks at me like I'm mad but politely continues, "But the buffets are still good, right?"

Before our surf at the Cowrie Hole I'd only seen Sabre surf on TV. It was during the national club finals two years ago, which were being televised live, and Sabre had been chosen to surf by her club, Merewether. Amongst the Parkos and Stephs, here running down the beach was this little girl, three feet high in a white Gath helmet and a rashie a dozen sizes too big, flanked by her teammates cheering her on. She was, of course, an instant hit. "I was just stoked that they picked me. It took me a while to get out and the wave I got was a fully sick one, but I blew it. I raced down the line, did a floater and didn't even land it, but the team made me feel so special. Made me feel like I got a 10." Soon after, a clip of her nailing a 540 on a skateboard half pipe went viral, generating a million Youtube views. I ask her if she prefers surfing or skating. "Can I say both? With surfing you can drive to Snapper thinking it might be good, but you actually get skunked. Or you could be driving to Ulladulla thinking it's going to be bad and it's absolutely pumping. With skating, it's always going to be the same."

We move onto the subject of favourite surfers. "I've got four. Philippa Anderson, Steph, Tyler and Sally. I've got four of the best women surfers in the world as my friends, but I really like Tyler cause she's got a kind heart." My questioning continues. Her record number of surfs in one day is seven (plus two skates), most pizza slices eaten in one sitting is eight (meat lovers), her favourite male surfer is Mick Fanning (kind heart, followed by Craig Anderson, humble), and her favourite surf movie is *A Deeper Shade of Blue* (although she lists about 30 others). Sabre talks about surfing Angourie, Snapper and Straddie without taking a breath. Sabre might just be the surfingest person I know.

At this point Sockie comes down the stairs, and Sabre asks if her little sister can sit in on the rest of the interview. The pair have been finishing each other's sentences all day anyway and you get the sense they rarely do anything without the other.

"So," I ask Sabre, "What do you want to do when you're older?"

"I want to be on tour," Sabre replies, before adding, "… with Sockie and Biggie and Nazzie. We've got it all sorted out. We're all going to live in one big house then all travel around together on tour." Sabre is already writing a book based around her own future life, her future biography currently 46 pages long. I ask if she wins the World Title at the end but she tells me there's no ending yet. She does say it would be nice to skateboard in the Olympics one day. Her Dad Justin won an Olympic swimming medal and she says she thinks her Dad would be proud if she made the Olympics.

Sabe and Sockie are pretty much across everything happening in surfing right now, so I put to them the question of who's going to win the World Title this year? Sockie jumps straight in on this one. "You, Sabie!"

















The upside of being shown up by a 10 year old girl? According to Seano it's having one of the best days ever with a true little frother. Sabre and the author at home in Newy.

"Sockie!" Dismisses Sabre, using an older sister tone, "I'm not even on the tour yet, so I can't win it this year." She thinks for a second and adds, nodding, "I'd like Owen and Tyler to win the World Titles this year. It must really suck being on tour by yourself when you're so young, but it's good for Owen and Tyler to have each other."

The family theme continues, and even though Sabre, at 10 years old won't win this year's women's World Title, she has a speech ready to go. "I wouldn't be as good as I am today without Sockie. She's pushing me really hard. Biggie and Nazzie have been pushing us too. Biggie fully charges, ay! Full little Mark Mathews. Nazzie's just started to surf and she's got this red shiny Gath. And guess what age Biggy started to surf?"

"Err, two?" I guess.

"Nah, he was only one!" Replies Sabre excitedly, before qualifying matter-of-factly, "Then he broke his leg when he was four dropping into the Bar Beach skate bowl. I was blowing up cause the doctors cut off the kneepads and I was like, 'Are you going to buy us new ones?'"

At this point Sabre tells Sockie that I'd been to America but didn't rate the food, and they both look at me like I'm crazy. They tell me they watched a Youtube clip of a guy who'd done a food tour of several Las Vegas hotels, and they tell me the food in Las Vegas all looked pretty good to them.

"Do you know you can get Krispy Kreme donuts for breakfast?" Says Sabre.
"And pizza?" Chimes Sockie.
"And pad thai and bacon and eggs?"
"Stone crabs."
"Eggs, steak, roasted tomato…"
"Do you know how big the prize money is for a WSL contest?" Asks Sabre.
"You get $60,000! Think of how long you could stay in Las Vegas with that! And how many Krispy Kremes you could order on room service! When I win the World Title, Sockie, that's soooo where we're going."



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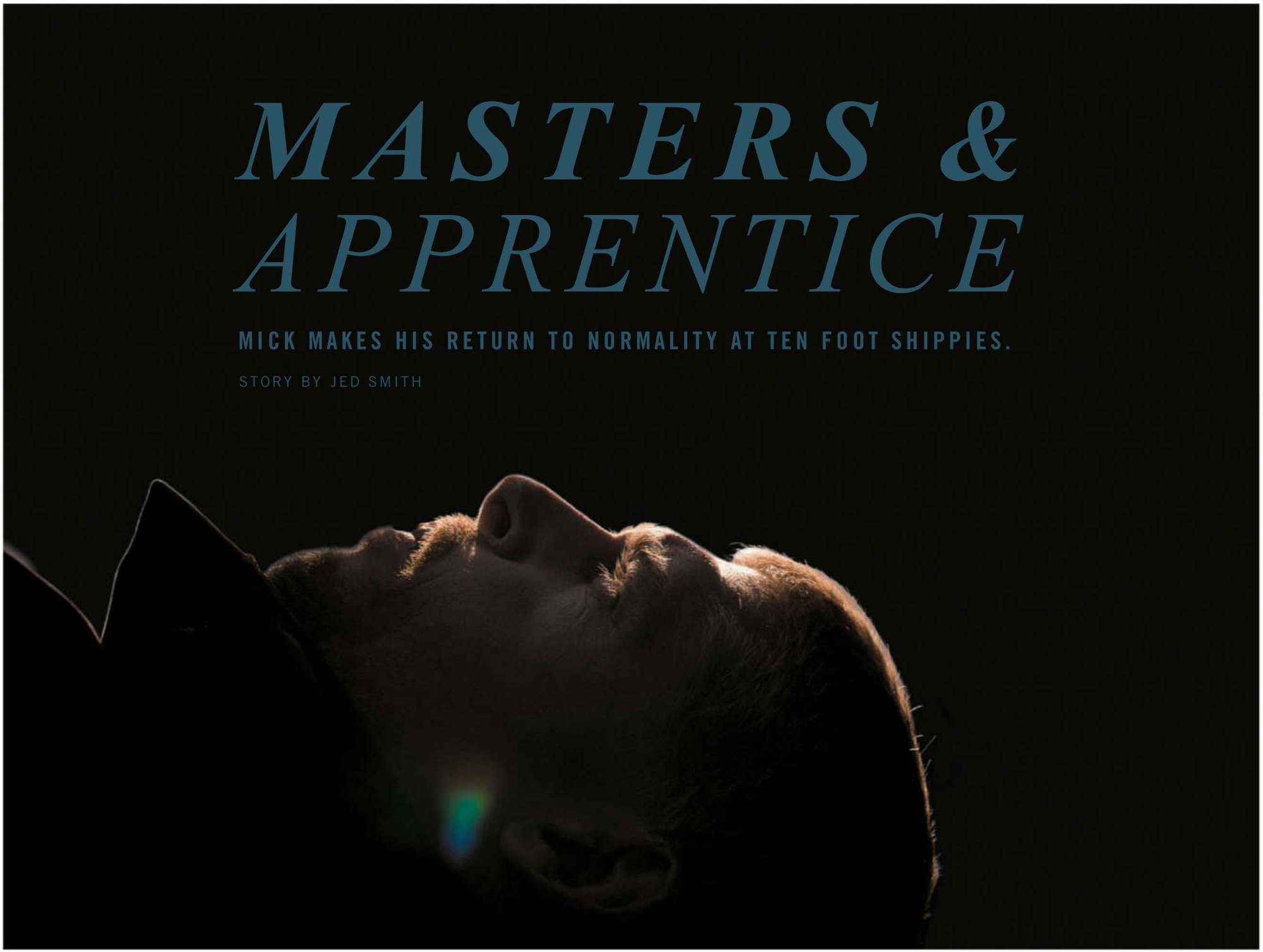
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MASTERS & APPRENTICE

MICK MAKES HIS RETURN TO NORMALITY AT TEN FOOT SHIPPIES.

STORY BY JED SMITH









Opposite: Not content with winning events and bashing sharks Mick Fanning spices up his year with a bit of pogo diving at inside Shippies. **Above:** The perch of the great bluff. **Previous spread:** Mr Muscle chooses his line. **Next spread:** Ryan Hipwood staircase flyer. **Insets:** Mathews hippy jump. Happy Loz. Holmer Cross beat down. (Chisholm). **Following spread:** Typically, Laurie Towner pulled one of the day's beast sets. Did he go and check out the human poo machine at the MONA museum afterwards? Unlikely. (Mitchell)

Few things in surfing have the capacity to inspire fear like a ten footer on the head at Shipsterns Bluff. Mick Fanning knows this. He copped exactly that after blowing the first wave of his first set at the slab recently. "I just wanted to get one really quick and I paddled for one, hit the backwash, and the step, and went straight over the falls and then came up and copped probably a ten footer straight on the head. So yeah, that was good introduction," he laughs.

If there is a more fearsome sight in surfing, Mick has experienced that too. But if you think a run in with a great white or a ten footer on the head at Shippies is enough to rattle his cage, you don't know Mick Fanning. "Nah, not really. I've put myself in some pretty stupid situations in the past. As long as I don't do that anymore, but, surfing those sort of waves, you know you can get injured but on the other hand if you get a good one you'll remember it for years."

The trip, Mick's first to Shippies, had been 14 years in the making. Ever since seeing the now seminal 2001 *Tracks Magazine* spread featuring current WSL commissioner, Kieren Perrow and slab-specialist, Mark Mathews, he knew he'd surf it one day. It was just a matter of the stars aligning. "I'd just gotten back from Tahiti (World Tour contest) and I got a text from Mark (Mathews) asking me what I was thinking, did I want to go, and I couldn't really think of an excuse not to," he says.

Along for the ride were a few of Mick's mates from the Goldy, including Brent Dorrington and Jay 'Bottle' Thompson, the latter taking time off from the job site to also make his Shippies debut. The local boys, Marti Paradisis, Danny Griffiths and Tyler Holmer-Cross were all over it. As were a crew of 'mainlanders' that included Laurie Towner, the man responsible for a handful of the heaviest waves ridden at Shippies; Ryan 'Hippo' Hipwood, arguably the world's most underrated heavy-wave specialist; and of course Mark Mathews, the man who helped blow the lid on the spot way back when.

Laurie recalls bumping into Mick at the airport, Laurie telling *Surfing World* White Lightning was looking a little paler than usual. "He seemed real nervous," laughs Laurie, though points out that he had every reason to be. Awaiting them the following day was a genuine thumper of a swell; long periods, sheet-glass, with a high likelihood of those unpredictable triple stepping closeout things that have made pretzels of men in the past.

Being the proud purist that he is, Mick made sure to honour the code and paddle the wave first. We know how that ended. So with the shellacking of a lifetime out of the way, it was time to grab the rope.

It might come as a surprise for a surfer of Mick's age and experience, but he's never really towed that much. The east coast, with its classical lines, point breaks and punchy beachies, doesn't really allow for it. As such he remained largely clueless on how his tow boards would go, or any of the finer points of towing for that matter. And this wasn't really the day to be learning.

"It was steppy and wobbly, real glassy, no strong offshore," recalls Laurie. "The bigger ones were a bit unpredictable so you needed the right wave, with the right shape, and to avoid the evil steppy ones," he says.

What's more, a look at the Shippies playing field reveals a Rubik's cube of variables and potential mishaps. A compact towing-zone requires you to coordinate with the paddle crew down the line as you whip in from behind the lump. Wave selection is all important, the surfer hoping his ski driver can spot the difference between one that's gonna stay open and one of those triple stepping mutants. "The ones the boys were trying to tell us were good ones looked like they were gonna break in the channel almost!" recalls Mick.

Fortunately, he had a local guru manning the controls as well as two of the spot's most experienced out-of-towners in Laurie and Mark coaching him. Though mostly they were just laughing at how much he was shitting himself. "They were sorta following me on the ski saying 'do this, do this,' and just sorta making me even more nervous! It was pretty classic," says Mick.





























“THEY’VE GOT THAT PLACE ON LOCK. DANNY GOT THE BIGGEST ONES, HE WAS GOING MAD.”

MICK

When his driver spotted a bomb, the rope pulled taut, and Mick was jerked in the direction of the cliffs. What happened next was, by all reports, pretty impressive.

“He rode it unbelieveably,” says Laurie, “Every sort of wave: steppy ones, big ones, hollow ones. He was a little nervous at the start but after he got his first bigger tow one he was amped and it was really good to see how comfortable he was out there,” he says.

Mick knifed four in a row, navigating the step with ease each time, and never falling once. He describes the experience in vivid detail.

“You sorta whip in and go past the people that are paddling, and then you gotta keep staying low, and as the wave starts drawing you see the boils starting and the steps ledging and you just have to try and hit the smallest part of the step. Once you hit that step, that’s when you gotta grab your inside rail and get under the lip and hopefully not get destroyed,” he says.

His session climaxed with a set on dark that was as good as anything you’ll see towed out there. But you won’t hear that from Mick. He was more impressed with the show put on by the local boys. In particular, Danny Griffiths, the hard-charging goofy footer who paints houses for a living and splits his time between Shippies and Desert Point.

“They’ve got that place on lock. Danny got the biggest ones, he was going mad,” says Mick. While Laurie points out the insanity of surfing Shippies backside.

“Can you even imagine it? Danny looks so comfortable out there. He does this little carve in front of the step to straighten up and get over it. He makes it look easy,” he says.

Tyler Holmer-Cross, meanwhile, bagged the days best beating. “After I got my first tow wave I turned and saw him get stuck in the biggest wedge and, awwww, it was so disgusting, I was so scared for him,” says Mick. All in all, a bloody good day, says Mick. “Waking up, being nervous as hell, then all the boys coaching each other into them and laughing at each other. It was just a good day with a good bunch of blokes,” he says.

This page: Danny Griffiths stands tall as Mount Everest collapses behind him. (Mitchell) After a truly crazy few months Mick’s voyage down to Shippies reconnected him with his life force and brought a welcome smile back to the dial. (Chisholm)

MYTH AND LEGEND



AN EXCLUSIVE EXTRACT FROM SEAN DOHERTY'S NEW BOOK: MP UNTOLD.
THE LOST STORIES OF AN AUSTRALIAN SURFING LEGEND

ILLUSTRATIONS BY NANDA ORMOND

SHOCK TREATMENT

By Mick Higgins
South Australian surfer, MP's flatmate and SE Asian travel companion

When he went through all that trouble I went out and saw him in the mental institution. You know, he was okay for a while. I reckon if he had of got out of jail quickly he might have been okay and bounced back and away from the inevitable.

It was the shock treatment that changed him, and the reason he had the shock treatment was that he thought he could put it over the doctors. He was of the opinion and the belief that once he'd done his 14 months he was getting out. The first time I went and saw him his Mum and sister picked me up from Burleigh because they didn't want me seeing him on my own.

They took me up there and his Mum made me promise not to tell him he was committed. He thought he only had to do 14 months, but he was in there until the doctors thought he was ready to come out. That was the only way his Mum could get him moved from the jail to the hospital. He thought he just had to serve his time and he was free. When he got sent to Boggo Road he got 14 months with a 10-month minimum. He thought at worst it was 14 months. When she asked to have him moved from the jail to the hospital they wouldn't do it because they didn't think he was sick enough. Finally she got the doctors to commit him, but they'd only commit him if she agreed to sign his freedom away.

When I went and seen him one time after, I remember Michael telling me how he had it all worked out and he was putting it over the doctors. I'd promised not to say anything about him being committed, but I told him, "Michael," I said, "you're not putting it over the doctors, mate. Trust me." They had him on this medication that slowed him right down. He was playing on half speed. My uncle was a schizophrenic and I knew the ins and outs of the disease cause I'd lived with him until my Mum finally got him committed, and I saw him go through a lot. The thing is – and this was the case with Michael – most of the time they're fine, but they go through episodes where they go into a dark place for a while. At the time he went though the chase he thought people were chasing him and trying to poison his food. He was in a dark place.

When I went to see him a second time he'd already put on a bit of weight and he'd lost a bit of hair. It was just before they'd started shock treatment on him and I said, "Michael, you've got to see the doctor and put all your cards on the table honestly and tell him what you've been doing. Tell him you'll do whatever it takes to get well, but tell him you don't want shock treatment."

He said, "I've got 'em believing I'm coming good already."

I said, "That's not what they think, mate! They're not going to let you walk out of here until they're ready."

He said, "I've only got four months to go and I'm walking out of here anyway." Well, I told him the truth and at first he didn't believe me, but it gradually dawned on him what was happening and for the first time in his life I saw a look on his face that told me he realised he wasn't in control. The first time I've ever seen doubt in his face.

I don't think he'd had many visitors at all. He was really upset that Nat Young hadn't been up to see him. For some reason it was Nat who he wanted to come up and see him, even though he and Nat hadn't been that close. He'd grown up idolising Nat, and when Nat had been set up and busted in Coolangatta all those years before, Michael jumped straight in the car with me and driven down to Byron to see him and help him. I didn't know whether that was in his head or not, because I'd never seen him and Nat together, never seen them talk, yet every time we went down to Byron Mick would go around to see Nat but he'd never be home. This house we'd visit, Michael would knock on the door and some guy would answer, "Sorry, Robert's overseas somewhere."

The third time I went to see Michael, I walked in and the first thing he asked was, "You haven't bumped into Nat, have you?" He wasn't thinking straight by then. He'd had two bouts of shock treatment and was on a course of 12, I think. He was signing for them himself. It was a bad scene. That was not long after I'd seen One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest and I'm thinking, they're going to fry his brain. This is going to be the end of him. I begged him to put his cards on the table and do whatever it takes, but please no more shock treatment. But that was incredibly hard for Michael, because Michael distrusted everyone, especially people in any kind of authority.

That was why he'd open up to me. When we'd lived together for all those years we'd sit and talk all night. I'd come from a similar background to him and we had a lot in common. I was an avid reader, self-educated largely, and even though Michael wasn't formally educated he was incredibly smart in a lot of ways. We'd talk about philosophy and all this high-minded stuff. He had such a keen mind. He actually started reading quite a lot when we lived together because I think he thought it was giving me an edge over him, and he hated that with anyone and anything. Everything was a competition. When he saw how much I was reading he did the same. He'd wait till I finished a book then he'd pick it up and read it, then he'd ask me questions about it to make sure I understood it the same way he understood it, and I remember being blown out on how he could read between the lines. He picked up on themes and big ideas and what was really happening in the story.

It was just a shame he couldn't pick up what was really happening in his own.


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MICHAEL IF YOU'RE OUT THERE...
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MF CAME CLOSED YOUR JERSEY...
STREUTH! WHERE IS HE? FLIP!
IF ANYONE SEES MP CAN YOU TELL HIM HIS HEAT'S IN THE WATER
BLOW ME DOWN CRIKEY! M.P.?!
M.P.?!

> “MY MIND COULDN’T FATHOM HOW HE COULD SURF LIKE THAT, LET ALONE THAT HE WAS SURFING LIKE THAT AFTER SMOKING A COUPLE OF BUNGERS.”

UNDER THE SHED

By Chappy from Geelong From Geelong, played Aussie Rules with Tommy for the Coolangatta Blues

I’ll tell you this without a bit of bullshit.

I’d had a couple of joints that morning and I was walking around Kirra Point when I bumped into Tommy and said, “Do you want to split a joint Tom?” Tom’s replied, “Does the Pope shit in the woods?” At the time I was playing Aussie Rules for Coolangatta with Tommy and PT, although Tom and I weren’t having oranges at halftime.

I said, “Well, where are we gonna go smoke this thing?” cause there were people everywhere watching a contest. I think it was the ‘75 Queensland titles and Kirra was eight foot and hollow and just perfect. Tom replies, “You know the shed halfway down the point at Kirra? Well Michael’s under there getting ready for his heat. We’ll go have a smoke with him.”

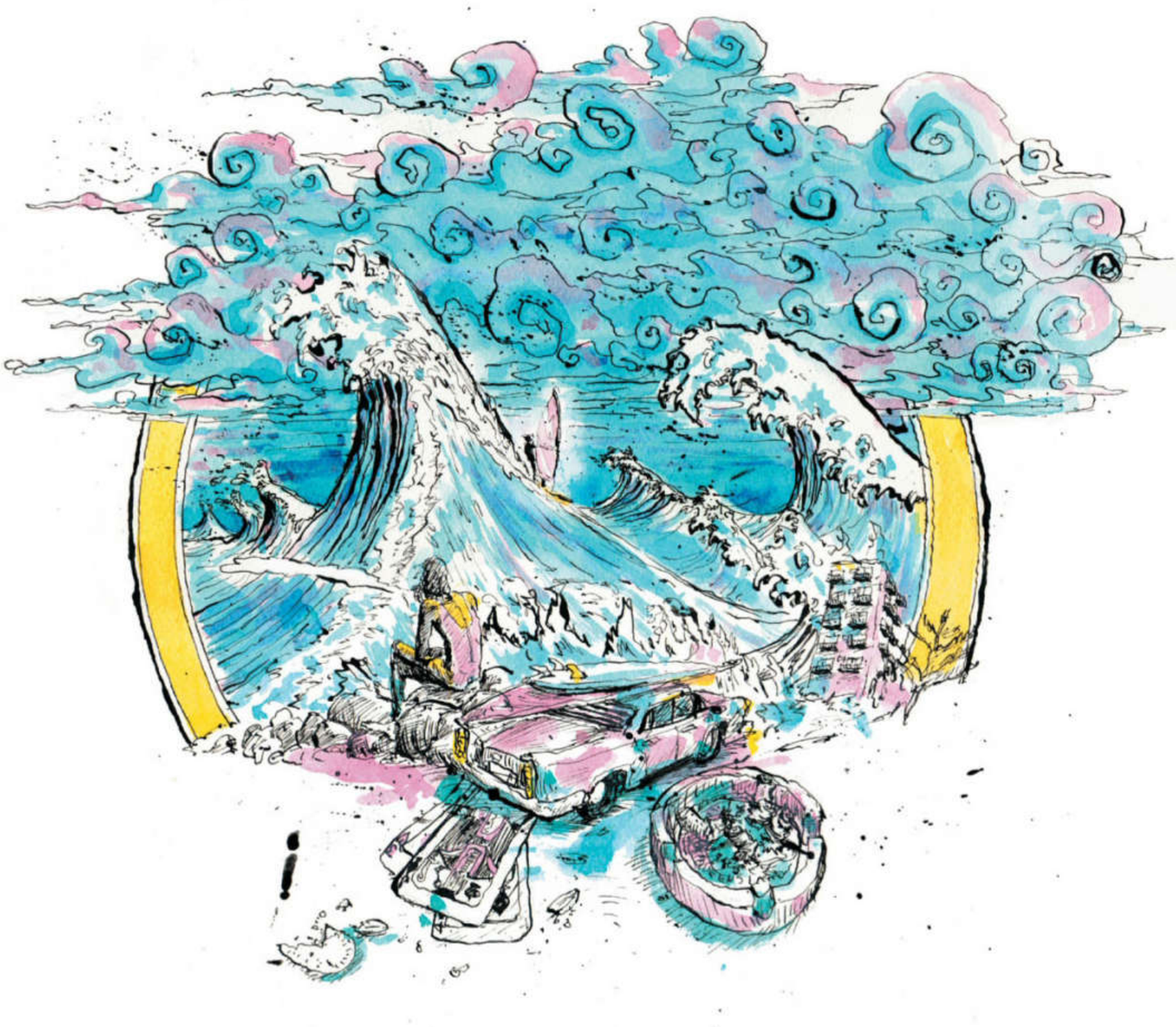
So we walked down and sure enough Michael was under there on his own, sitting down underneath the shed, while a few feet above his head they were commentating the contest. So we smoked the first one and had just lit the second one when the guys upstairs started yelling out on the PA, “Michael Peterson, your heat’s about to paddle out, where are you?” Michael didn’t seem to take any notice, so I said, “You hear that Michael?” He said, “Pass us the joint, Chine.”

It was the early rounds of the contest and they were 20-minute heats, and Kirra was big, really big, so it was going to take ages to get out… but MP wasn’t budging. The three of us smoked this joint and all the time the guy on the PA is yelling out, “If anyone’s seen Michael Peterson can they tell him his heat’s in the water!” I’m cracking up because I’m that stoned, and the guy upstairs is starting to panic because the star surfer of the contest hasn’t showed up. “Has anyone seen Michael Peterson?” They’ve got no idea he’s three feet below ‘em.

The heats started by this stage, but MP still isn’t showing any signs of moving, then he finishes the joint, gets up without saying a word, grabs his board, and walks off toward Big Groyne across the rocks.

We see him materialise in the lineup about 10 minutes later, by which stage I reckon the heat was at least half over. Well, this set has hit and he’s too far inside it and he’s paddled up it as it starts to break, but he gets three quarters up the face and he just swings around and takes off under the lip, freefalls into the barrel, and gets tubed the whole length of the point. This big red board has popped out down the end of the point and that was it, he’d won the heat on one wave. That wave just raised the hairs on the back of my neck.

I turned to Tommy and said, “How can he fucking do that?” I was flabbergasted. My mind couldn’t fathom how he could surf like that, let alone that he was surfing like that after smoking a couple of bungers. I was so stoned I couldn’t even stand up at that point. It made me hopeless and made him a genius.



"THEY'VE WATCHED HIM FOR THREE QUARTERS OF AN HOUR TILL HE'S DISAPPEARED OVER THE HORIZON."

CYCLONE SURFER

By John Poole
Long time friend from NSW South Coast

One thing with Michael around that period, that period around '81, Rabbit talks about him being Darth Vader standing on the hill looking out to sea, but I don't think it was anything sinister. I reckon he was just thinking about stuff.

He really got into sailboarding. A mate of ours, JD, had a flat at North Kirra on the sixth floor. A cyclone swell was hitting the coast at the time and the waves were 10 foot, windy and wild, howling from the southeast and the boys were all up there playing cards as all the job sites were washed out. Nobody was surfing… the surf was way too big and ugly. Anyway, about 10 in the morning, right across the road, MP pulled up in the car park. He's got his sailboard on the roof of the car and he's going for a sail. He didn't even check it, just took his board off the roof. He knew he'd be able to come in on the beaches at North Kirra… he just had to find a way to get out.

Michael pulled the board off the roof, rigged up, put his wettie on, had a puff and he's out there. The boys are watching all this, because they're all Kirra surfers and were intrigued as to how Michael was going to get out, because it was pretty wild. Well Michael has just gone, bang, straight out. He tacked a little, got a gap in the waves, flown over a big one and powered straight out. The boys, they've watched him for three quarters of an hour till he's disappeared over the horizon. They were up six floors so it's a long way to the horizon from that far up.
But he was gone.

He's 10 mile, 20 mile out to sea on his own in cyclone seas. I asked him about it later because I've done a lot of serious ocean sailing and he was going, "How good is it out there, Pooley! You should try it out there on your own!" I've been out to sea in cyclones, and I reckon it would have been 40 foot of ocean swell out there that day, there'd be valleys and mountains out there, and Michael was out there all day on his own. He found it amazing. Here was a wave that never ended; he could ride ocean swells for as long as he wanted. It was complete freedom.

He came back in at four o'clock that afternoon. Out there on his own in a cyclone for six hours, and you've never seen a guy happier.



ROAT TRIP

By Michael Ho
MP's Hawaiian protege

We did a couple of road trips for sure. No one ever flew in those days. We did Queensland to Bells runs, Queensland to Sydney, Queensland to Phillip Island.

And with MP driving it was fucking gnarly, brah. You fucking kidding me? You kidding me? I'm still scared today when I think about it. Driving full on in the Fiat with David Bowie as loud as it can go. Strap my seatbelt on and pray.

He had this thing where he always used to put his hand on the windscreen when a truck went by in case a rock hit it. I'm like, "Fuck, what are you doing?" And he'd never say anything. Then one time – boosh! – the windscreen explodes and he's holding it together with his hand. I'm freaking out. He pulls over and I go, "What are we gonna do now?" It's dark and he's mumbling to himself, going, "Newcastle… Coolangatta… eight hours… we'll still be there tonight!" He smashes all the glass out of the car but it's going everywhere. He puts his sunnies on, pulls his hood down over his face so you only see his sunnies, and off we drive into the night. I just go, "Here we go, brah!" Strap myself in, scardest I ever been, and off we go.

He didn't slow down at all without the windscreen, in fact I think he mighta even gone faster. It was the scardest I ever been, but he wasn't listening to me. He was like, "This is Australia, buddy. You want out I'll pull over and you can hitch." But he wasn't going to be stopped. Literally I put myself in his hands. I reclined my seat, laid back, and hung on. There are still chips of glass flying, bugs hitting us, and he did his best, dark glasses on at night, flying up the highway no problem… rahhhhhhhh! Say a prayer. It was so scary, scared the hell out of me. He was a gnarly driver, but he was good. He drove just like he surfed. He stayed in his lane with the pedal to the metal and David Bowie blaring.

I used to be so happy whenever I made it to Queensland, me kissing the ground when we got there. Once I got to his place I was happy for him to drive as fast as he liked, cause we'd only ever be driving down to Kirra and I wanted to get there as fast as we could. "Go now, brah! Get me to Kirra!"

Then he'd look over at me and laugh and go, "Now you're all psyched, huh!"



THE BLOODY LEGEND

Asher Wilde Pacey, traveller, lover of wild nights, wide barrels, crazy boards and living life as it comes...joined us at TRVL on a whim for a spur-of-the-moment swell which took us across five islands in six days. The swell had come in different to the forecast so as we read the ocean, not the charts, each day became a choose-your-own-adventure style decision on where we would head, living on next to no sleep, coffee, sidecart meals, incredible moments, cars, boats, flights, ferries, two flat tyres and overnighters pushing to make daybreak for pumping waves with no-one in sight.

This was our first expedition with Asher and definitely not our last. We're on standby right now, waiting for another blip on the maps - we have no idea where it will be, the only thing we do know is that it's going to be another fun filled adventure. Follow the story on our journal at

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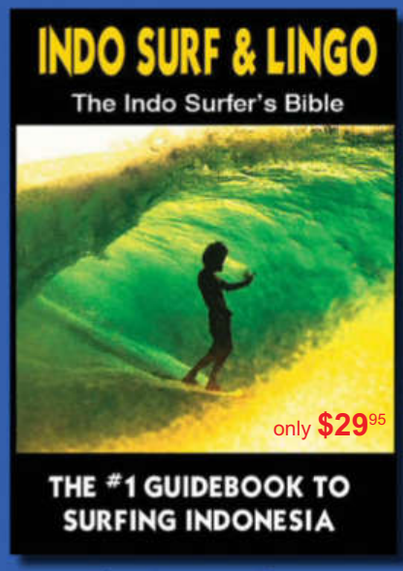
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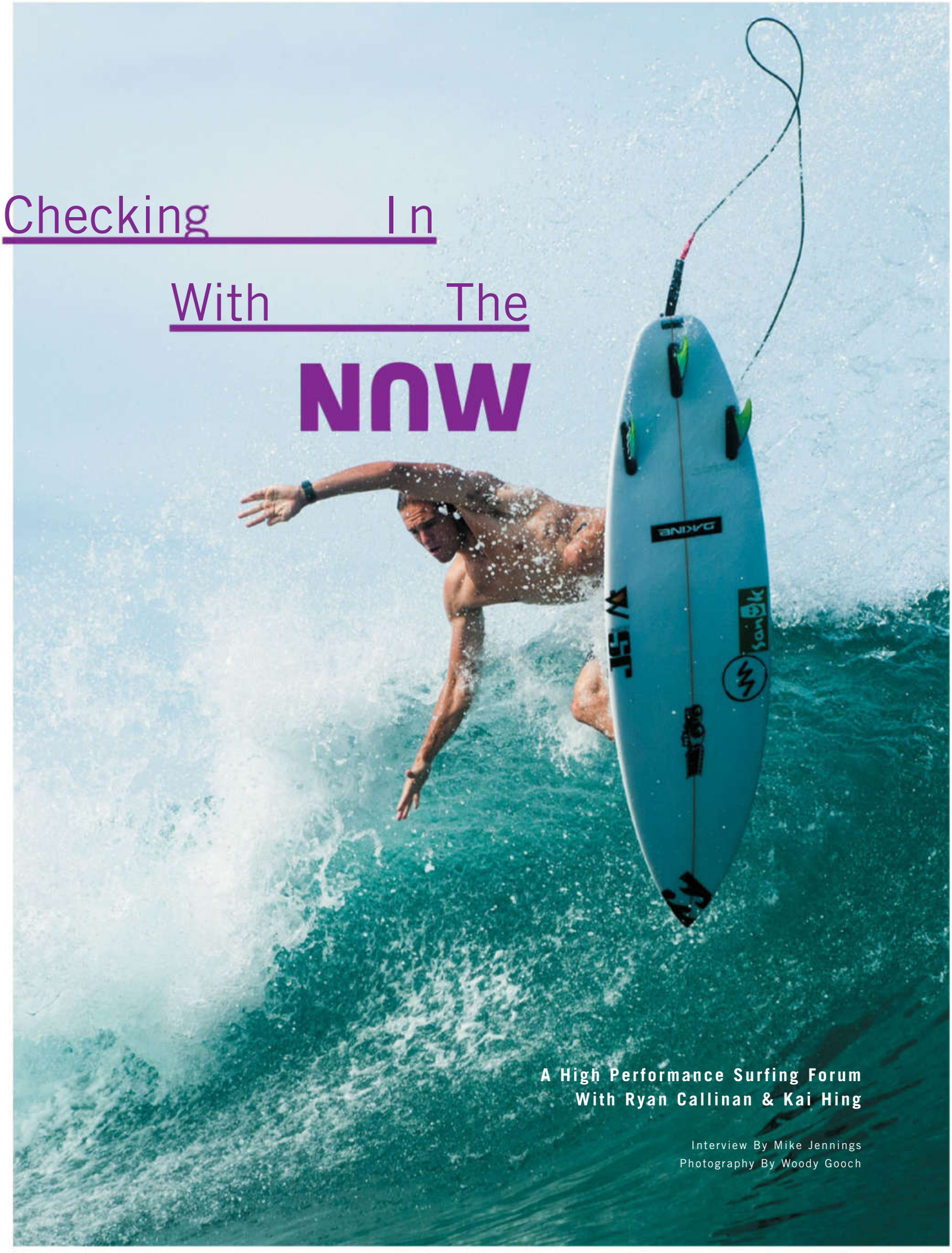
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Checking In With The NOW



A High Performance Surfing Forum With Ryan Callinan & Kai Hing

Interview By Mike Jennings
Photography By Woody Gooch



Just back from a trip to Indonesia with rising photographer Woody Gooch, Ryan Callinan and Kai Hing were floating around their hometowns at the beginning of this spring for a little bit before going off on their respective ways. Ryan Callinan, 23, would be heading to Portugal for two Prime events that could move his current 5th place on the WQS into a confirmed start place on the 2016 World Tour – a success that would reconcile the two career halting injuries he's undergone in the transition from juniors to the big leagues. Hing, five year's Callinan's junior, to a different part of Europe. Wales. To compete in the first high profile surfing wave pool competition since the infamous inland Surfing Championships won by Tom Carroll in 1985. While at differing stages of their surf careers, competitive and otherwise, they are both at the forefront of surfing high performance, and thus students of what makes good high performance surfing in 2015. So who better to machine gun some questions at on what modern performance surfing is right now? And while they answer we'll simultaneously flick through some beautiful photos of them demonstrating that act in Indonesia. First a little disclosure, this little two man panel was meant to be done on a three person phone call, but young Kai Hing was repeatedly nowhere to be found, (*shakes fist at the sky*) he was off the grid 4W driving or something, so quite seamlessly, the brilliant Mike Jennings, (that's me!) has stitched these two interviews together as if it all took place in one breezy chat. The magic of print, brilliant isn't it?



Above: Barrel to oncoming ramp? The boys see endless possibilities. **Opening spread:** Air reverses may be on the way out but R-Cal says they'll remain in his arsenal of rad movez. One thing that'll never go out though... scrunchies.

SW: Gentlemen, hello. Hi. Thanks for joining the panel. What's the best surfing you've seen this year?

RC: That would have to be Filipe Toledo in the Prime at Trestles. He could do anything he wanted and know he wasn't going to fall. It was crazy! I can't remember if it was his first wave there or his first scoring wave but he took off and the first turn he did was a huge blow-tail reverse, straight into a big wrap-around carve, straight into one of those vertical snaps, float, air reverse, float, air reverse… and it was like, "How? How do you beat this guy?" He's always been amazing but that performance solidified everything for me. It solidified the hype that is around him and it made me realise, "Wow, okay, it's real."

KH: I don't think anyone can really touch him when it's three foot and under, the way he can go from doing the biggest full rote you can do before springing into a snap, then into another full rote, it's surfing at another level. It's hard not to appreciate that. Especially with how young he still is. He's been the highlight surfer this year for a lot of events but disappointing in others, like Chopes, but it was cool to see CJ and Owen do their thing there. A lot of the stuff done in Cluster was my highlight. Freestone's section, that really threw me and blew me away. I didn't expect that. Noa and Jack and Coleborn and Ryan, they all blew me away and you could see how much work and time they put into their sections.

What's the best turn you've seen this year?

RC: I've been really interested and enjoying rail turns and flow and there were a couple of snaps that Mick did at J-Bay, they're imprinted on my mind. Holy shit they were so quick and crisp and perfect, everything about them was as perfect as surfing gets, and he went straight into the next one and did something probably even bigger. Everything with Mick's surfing is on point every single time.

KH: That thing Dane did in Morocco. It was mental. It's such a big open faced wave, the way he was going from holding his rail on the bottom turn to a massive grab rail, half the fins of his board out, all the way down, before holding the line into a giant tail slide. It was sick to see him transfer from one huge rail carve to the next, and then to the next again, and pull it all off so stylishly and so smooth.

What's the most overrated move out there at the moment?

RC: (laughs) I think a lot of people would think like me with this but I had a heat against Carlos Munoz in the US Open and he did a superman right on the shorey, and the crowd went nuts! He didn't land it but it was hyped up so big. I think supermans are so bad.

Well, that's another question I have for you here: Will the superman ever make a comeback?

RC: No. I hope not. I went through a phase where I did them, but they're not very good. I don't think they look functional. There's legs going everywhere and they're actually a lot easier than they look.

KH: I've never tried one and I don't really plan to. I'm sure they're fun but they're a bit of a write-off. Like, when someone puts one in a clip you go, "Did you really just put that in a clip?"



Opposite: A few questions Mike didn't ask Ryan (top) and Kai (bottom): Can jumping on trampolines improve your full roters? Can bouncing on nanny's double bed make your finners bigger? Does having a high jump scholarship at Narrabeen Sports Centre give you increased boost? These are questions Ryan is clearly pondering in the image above.

I love stuff like passion pops and big spins, I think they're rad. But I guess a superman itself is a bit… how you going.

RC: A Christ air or something would be sick, but good luck to whoever wants to try that. Even double grabs, no-one does them any more. They seem like they're out. Unless you're doing a backflip.

KH: Sometimes you do need to do a double grab. As you're doing a rodeo you do a double grab, but as for just a straight double grab, it's kind of like a cheat to doing an air.

Kelly did a type of double grab when he did that double air-reverse in Portugal.

RC: Yeah, those ones are okay, but the ones where your hands are on each rail, I don't even know where it came from but there just seemed to be a lot of hate for them all of a sudden. But they're not that bad.

KH: I guess the air reverse has expired, run to the death. You see guys pushing the limits with their alley-oops now, Julian and Kolohe, and Jordy as well with that huge one at North Point. They've definitely shied away from that standard – race race race – air reverse. But I still like doing them. Whenever you're in the air and you're doing a 360, you're going to feel cool no matter how it looks. I guess that's why it is so blown out because it is such a fun thing to do. So I'll write them off but I'm still going to do them, because they're so fun.

RC: I'm into them. They feel good. I don't care what anyone says. If you do a big one it feels amazing. A big air reverse is still sick. Especially a full rotation, but, and I'm going to go into the contest realm here, the judging I think is a bit off at the moment. With turns they're perfect, but then someone does an air reverse and, even if it's a good one, they're not giving it much. A good air reverse is still hard to do, but they just go, "Nuh, seen it."

What's the difference between a good air reverse and a bad air reverse?

KH: Height, the way you spin, how much you spin, and the sections that you're hitting as well. Whenever I surf with Noa I get such a reality check with what sections you have to be hitting for an air to look sick these days.

RC: The landing has a lot to do with it too, if you land and can go straight into something else, then it's really good. That's hard to do.

Like the way John John seems to land right in the transition.

RC: Yep. That and how Kolohe and Gabriel seem to land and then do a little shuffle and have the same amount of speed and can go into something else, that's good. Air reverses can be really bad. If you race along and you do one and then the rest of the wave just goes by and that's all you've done, that's pretty bad. But, air reverses, yeah, I like 'em!

What's the best move getting around at the moment?

RC: That thing Julian did in his clip the other day was pretty crazy. I don't even know what that was.

I'd call it a double alley-oop, but people get more technical than that on it.

RC: Yeah, I'll go with you. I like that. That's one of the best for sure. There's so much stuff happening now that you forget about a lot. You watch something and go, "That was the craziest!" And then the next week there is something just as crazy. Oh, sorry, let's go back to the other question: The best manoeuvre I've seen this year is obviously that Matt Meola thing, whatever the fuck that was, that was the best. I watched that 500 times and I still couldn't wrap my head around it.

KH: That's probably the manoeuvre of the year, right? That thing was fucked up. That was another level of surfing. The backflip is still pretty cool. Whenever someone does a boned out one of them they get pretty hyped up.

What about something happening more consistently in 2015?

RC: I'm not sure. Straight airs are kind of still in. Staleys? I like staleys.

KH: I think the level that barrel riding is getting to. The way that people are dealing with the foam ball for so long. I've noticed that a lot recently, to get scores, especially on tour, you can't be slipping in and out of barrels, you need to be getting pretty well deep on the foam ball and then coming out. That's impressed me a lot.

What does a bad air look like?

KH: Something where you're not actually doing it off the section and you're kind of doing a chop-hop thing. That makes me cringe. And when people get down low and come out on the foam so it can be classified as a make, that's pretty rank.







"PEOPLE TRYING TO DO GNARLY STUFF HAS TO PUSH EVERYONE'S SURFING TO NEW LEVELS."

KAI



Over on that other page is Kai Hing flying gracefully as a swan just like Billy Elliott in the finale of the film of the same name. Hooray for you Billy! You followed your heart and you've realised your dream. **Above:** At first light that light left will get destroyed! Don't believe us? Turn the page.

RC: Early grabs. When people grab before they leave the lip. I can't stand that.

I don't even know if I've ever even seen that.

RC: Yeah, you've seen it. They don't go very high and they just flip them around. It's almost like a safety air.

Who do you look to for inspiration with your surfing?

KH: Definitely people like Julian and Goodall and Coleborn. Guys that have come out of the (Sunshine) Coast and have given it a crack. Those guys push me and whenever they come back and I'm surfing with them they give me a reality check of what I need to be surfing like.

RC: Julian has got everything. He can do crazy airs and crazy carves and his bottom turns… his style is so nice. Creed's clips have been pretty cool recently, and I've seen some stuff of Craig that I don't think has been released yet that is really good, I like watching his surfing as well.

Kelly Slater in 2015? He was the guy that for a generation put out sections people obsessed with. Ground breaking stuff. Do you still watch Kelly to improve your own surfing?

RC: You don't see much of him except in the contests, he's not putting out clips, but he had one just after J-Bay with Shaun Holmes, that was one I went back and watched a couple of times. His board looked so nice, everything was flowing, he was going so fast. He can hold his rail better than anyone, he's probably still in the top five of surfers right now. You think he's not going that good this year but you watch him surf somewhere in good waves and he's better than everyone.

But does his surfing inspire your own approach in any way?

RC: He has a couple of things that are inspiring, like where he comes so quick off the bottom, and hits sections, and lays into them and then he stands tall and waits for the next part before he drives again, I really like the way he does that. He almost looks like he's disinterested, and then he goes so fast off the bottom and puts 110 percent into the top. I really love that. His barrel riding is obviously phenomenal. He's the best of all time, there's no doubt about it. I don't look heaps to him though, I think I've really started to feel how I want to surf myself.

KH: I'm more psyched on watching Kelly Slater's surfing from years ago, like going back to the old Taylor Steele movies. When he was coming up he was surfing more excitingly, even though he's landing 540s or 720s, whatever you want to call them, now. He's pushing the boundaries of how old you can be and still win a World Title, but I get more psyched on watching his old clips and how technically perfect he is and was.

When something crazy happens, like when Meola does the spindle flip, when Kelly does the double air-rev, do you start thinking about these manoeuvres and try bring them to your game?

RC: I don't think I could do one if I tried. I'm still trying to do the basics. I definitely think about them though, like the one Julian did the other day, I don't think it was the craziest thing, it was just really cool, it looked more achievable to me than the Kelly 720 or the Mat Meola spindle. I'm really into trying to do things that feel really good and those things are hucking yourself a hundred mile an hour which is kind of the opposite. But I'm sure if I went on a trip filming for something soon I'd be trying to do something like that.

KH: When you see those manoeuvres you feel like you can push yourself to the next level, when no-one's done it before you kind of have the mindset of, "I might as well not try it," 'cause in a sense you want to make something that you know is make-able. I guess people trying to do gnarly stuff has to push everyone's surfing to new levels.

Do aerials that feature technical tricks and grabs come second to height? Does height always win out in a good air?

RC: That's a hard one. It's dependent on different factors. If you spin a shitload with one that's got a really technical grab, it's probably going to be better than just a big normal air. But, if you do a high one with a technical grab and don't spin that much, it's going to be better than a normal air where you spin heaps. They all impress me in different ways, you always pick up on things, even if it's little, but the big ones are the ones that grab everyone's attention for sure.



> "YOU THINK KELLY'S NOT GOING THAT GOOD THIS YEAR BUT YOU WATCH HIM SURF SOMEWHERE IN GOOD WAVES AND HE'S BETTER THAN EVERYONE."
>
> RYAN

Opposite: Ryan Callinan thinks the Superman smells worse than a bucket of squid left in your van for a week after a fishing trip to Brunswick Heads. And he may be right. He may also be wrong. But he's actually right. Poooo-wee.

KH: If you're doing an air and it's only small but you're super inverted, I kind of find that more gnarly than how high it is, especially when you see Freestone, he does these gnarly flips on his backhand and his forehand and they look so crazy. I definitely don't think that it needs to be high to be a good air.

What about equipment today, what do you ride, and what are you looking for in a board?

KH: I was thinking that a lot of people will go back to the old school, really long stuff because I swear it looks so much sicker to see a big turn on a longer board than the fishy things everyone rides at the moment. I was speaking to Owen the other day and he reckons he's never had a board under six foot. Even his fishes are still long. He's a giant of a human but you can see the effect of that. When someone has grown up on longer boards they have got more of a drawn out style.

RC: If you're doing airs and stuff, the boards that Craig and Noa and Creed and those guys ride look so good, they look like they can go so fast and get so much pop, but they're different to the boards I ride. The boards I'm riding are a bit more like, say, what Mick rides. I ride a 6'0" and it's got a really pointy nose and a fair bit of rocker and it does really good turns, probably not as good in the air, but it still does airs. It's what I'm used to, and it's what I like too.

Does skating have an influence on your surfing?

RC: Yeah. I love watching it. I don't do it. Ever. Too painful. I stuffed my hands up five months ago trying to bomb my hill, went head over heels and slammed on my hands and I had huge cuts and I haven't stepped on one since. But I love watching it, how much control they have over their board and how much pop they get is amazing. Those skate movies, like Pretty Sweet, love them.

KH: I'd way rather watch skating than surfing but every time I do it I get hurt, so I tend not to do it too much. I'll go hang at the park because all my friends are skaters, I'll have a little roll here and there but I'm too scared of hurting myself. You can see the way Chippa transfers from move to move, it's like a skate line. His (Cluster) section when he's surfing Ulus it's probably the most relevant thing to skating I've seen in surfing, like going from a full rote to another snap and then another snap and then a finner, it reminds me so much of skating watching that.

When do you feel most on with your surfing? What ingredients bring the best out of you?

RC: For some reason, it's right next to a contest. If I go to a QS and I paddle out down the beach, I don't know why but I feel like I surf my best there. I don't know if I'm trying to impress everyone in the competitors' area or I'm trying harder because of the contest or I'm just going out there to get my feet in the wax or what, but for some reason I always surf well then. Or if I've just been away for a long time, and I come home. It's almost a relaxing thing, you wander down and surfing with all your friends. No worries. You're trying to impress people but you don't really care whether you do or not. They're the two times that I'm on point the most.

KH: When I surf with people my age that are ripping. It kind of brings the competitive side out of me. I want to go bigger and go better. Also, just seeing good waves come through. When I'm out and there's howling northerlies and there's some huge right ramps, I'll probably get more psyched up to surf than ever. Whenever the waves are good the inner froth comes out.

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Robert Edward Machado

42, CARDIFF BY THE SEA, CALIFORNIA

ILLUSTRATION BY NANDA ORMOND

***SW*: You can surf one session as any surfer from history in their prime. Who is it and where?**
RM: Tom Curren. J-bay. Experienced every feeling you could feel riding a surfboard. Speed, flow, power, tubes, perfect lines... Or Gerry Lopez at the Pipeline. One of those sessions in the 70s where he got blown out of a stack of 10 footers all day long.

Bald on top with ponytail or thick black curly hair all over your entire body?
Always been a fan of hair but not body hair. I've shaved my head and I've had a ponytail but I've never had both at the same time. Might be kinda sick.

You're the editor of the New York Times for a day. What's tomorrow's headline?
NO BAD NEWS TODAY! TAKE THE DAY OFF AND DO SOMETHING FUN.

Kelly Slater doesn't exist and never has. Describe the world we live in?
11 other dudes have World Titles and surfing isn't anywhere near where it is now.

You can only surf one board at one wave for the rest of your life?
Uluwatu has so many vibes and I love it. It's consistent. It handles anything from one to 20 feet. All tides. Tubes. Turns. Or maybe Desert Point? Could you ever get sick of getting tubed? Wait, G land. Another amazing option... so much variety in the wave. The board would my Greenough inspired twinny. Maybe a 6'2". The thing needs foam cause I'm gonna surf until I'm 100.

You can go back in time and re-surf any heat from your career. Which do you choose and what's the result?
I honestly wouldn't change a thing. Everything happens for a reason. That heat with Kelly at Pipe in 95 was a true blessing. It reminded me of who I really am and what surfing is for me. The waves were absolutely pumping... Perfect 8 to 10 foot and it was just me and a friend trading waves. The fact that there were people scoring our rides and that it was for a World Title became irrelevant to me. I cant even imagine how different my life would be if I would have won that World Title, and when I think about it... I'm glad I didn't. It made me into the person I am today. And I'm really content with that. That moment showed people a side of professional surfing that you rarely see.

Which number is better 12 or 37?
I like em both.

You were born in Sydney but your folks decide not go back to the states. What are you doing with yourself today?
I'm in a band called "Goons of Doom" surfing all over Oz and Indo loving life.


























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